DECEMBER 1951

COMMENTARY

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

Allen Mandelbaum — Lucy S. Dawidowicz — Harold Rosenberg
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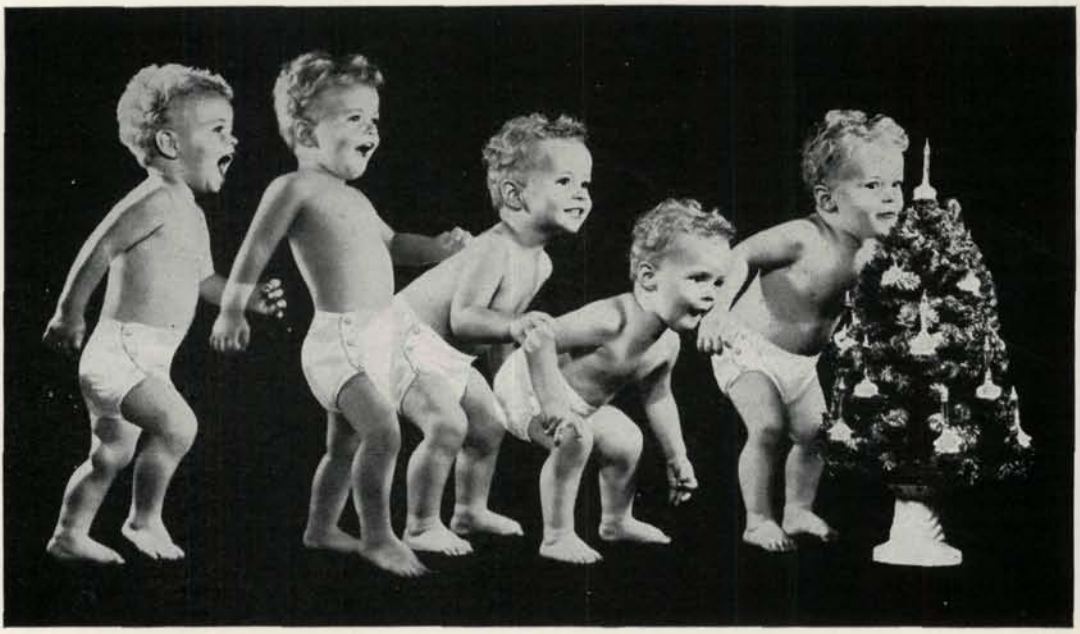

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COMMENTARY

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IN FORTHCOMING ISSUES OF

COMMENTARY

Israel's "Oriental" Jews *Hal Lehrman*

Recently, the press reported that one hundred and fifty Indian Jews had demonstrated before the Jewish Agency office in Tel Aviv, protesting against "racial discrimination" and demanding to be sent back to their native India. With about half the population of the new state made up of immigrants from "backward" countries like Iraq, Iran, Yemen, Syria, North Africa, India, etc., absorption becomes an enormous task. Hal Lehrman describes the situation of these newcomers and analyzes the implications of their presence for Israeli society.

The Mystery of the Soviet Confessional *Melvin J. Lasky*

Why does the Communist regime insist upon confessions that no one believes? Why doesn't Stalin, like Hitler, simply "liquidate" his victims without benefit of such elaborate rites? Melvin J. Lasky attempts an answer, and in the process throws fresh light on the nature of Communist totalitarianism.

Tom's Death *Hans Meyerhoff*

The story of the last turbulent days in the life of Thomas Wolfe, as heard from the novelist's sister.

Bread and Democracy in Greece *Maurice Goldbloom*

American policy in Greece is viewed as a test-tube case. Have we really "defeated Communism" there and given a spur to democratic reconstruction? or have we forced a reactionary regime upon the unwilling Greek people? Mr. Goldbloom, who formerly wrote the department "The Month in History" for this magazine, has just returned from two years in Greece with ECA.

While God Waited at Porcupine *Ben Lappin*

A portrait of the editor of a Canadian Yiddish newspaper, whose editorial functions included such things as match-making for his readers and job placement for rabbis and cantors. In "From the American Scene."

The Study of Race: From Skulls to Genes *Don J. Hager*

The study of human races has had more elements of myth mixed up with it than most branches of science. Today, Mr. Hager reports, our better understanding of the mechanism of heredity opens to us the prospect of being able, for example, to discover whether the Jews of Yemen and Ethiopia have more in common genetically with the Jews of the West than is the usual belief. In "The Study of Man."

Conquistador—A Story *Prudencio de Pereda*

The tale of a proud Spaniard who lands in New York, to become a cigar-maker, and, to his shame, a "marginal character."

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COMMENTARY

BRITAIN'S PROSPECTS UNDER CHURCHILL

And What Future for Labor and the Welfare State?

GEORGE LICHTHEIM

LONDON

ELECTORAL post-mortems, in this Age of Gallup, tend to be an affair of evaluating not personalities but percentages. In a homogeneous and politically mature community such as Britain, where violent swings of opinion are rare and local issues seldom play much part, it is the marginal voter and the marginal constituency that count, and the more marginal they are the more average they tend to be. A slight shift in public favor in a dozen or so constituencies can make all the difference. In a roundabout way, it is true, this lets in the personal element—hence the new importance of the radio voice and the television smile. Hence also the inevitable post-election remorse: if only our side had put on a better television speaker . . . if only Watts had sounded more friendly and Botts had kept his temper. . . .

Rarely have such speculations been more unreal than when applied to the British general election of October 25, 1951. For many months it had been plain to virtually all observers that the next electoral test would put the Tories in. The polls, as usual, rated their chances too high—not from conscious bias but from the ingrained weakness of all sampling tests: failure adequately to gauge the mood of the less articulate section of the public, which, in an industrial country, happens to contain the larger percentage of probable Labor (or Fair Deal) supporters. But when this factor is corrected, the predictions were reasonably accurate, though many Socialists, and nearly all Conservatives and Liberals, expected the Tory majority to be around 50 seats.

Why was there so little real uncertainty about the probable result? The answer tells one a good deal about the operation of the British two-party system. In the first place, over the past eighty years it has been extremely rare for a political party to win two general elections in a row. There have indeed been occasions when the inexorable "swing of the pendulum" was insufficient to bring about a change of government, but

---

Now that the Conservatives are in and Labor out, the world watches the British scene with curiosity and concern, awaiting the answers to such questions as: What effect will the dynamic Winston Churchill have on the foreign policy of the Atlantic powers? Will he try to destroy the Welfare State and "de-socialize" England? And what is the future of the Labor party—will Aneurin Bevan succeed Clement Attlee as its spokesman? Will it become "anti-American"? GEORGE LICHTHEIM will be remembered by COMMENTARY readers for his perceptive articles in previous issues, the most recent being "Toward Anglo-American Unity on Asia," February 1951.

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that was always due to some extraneous factor. In 1910, the Liberals—rebounding from their great victory of 1906—were artificially kept in power by the Irish Nationalists who had a stable political base across the Irish Channel. In 1950, the dying Liberal party, in a final galvanic effort, just managed to keep Labor in office by preventing the pendulum from swinging too far in the direction of the Tories. This time, with only 108 Liberal candidates in the field as against 475 in 1950, the result was a foregone conclusion unless the Tory party, by some colossal blunder, threw the bulk of the disintegrating Liberals into the Labor camp. Mr. Churchill was careful, however, to avoid any such blunder, and he was greatly helped by the Persian and Egyptian crises, or rather by Mr. Morrison's inept handling of the former, which convinced many Liberal voters that it was indeed "time for a change."

In the closing stage of the campaign, the critical attitude of the liberal *Manchester Guardian* may have done more to swing the Liberal vote against the government in a number of marginal constituencies, notably in Lancashire, than any other single factor. Here one must bear in mind that Lancashire gets a third of the raw cotton for its textile factories from the Sudan, and that Labor's handling of the Persian crisis had caused genuine alarm among people who depend for their livelihood on the uninterrupted working of the cotton mills, especially alienating members of the Nonconformist (Methodist, etc.) middle class who are the backbone of Liberalism in this region. This factor even caused a junior minister in the Labor government, who stood for a Lancashire constituency, to send a public message to Mr. Morrison in the middle of the election campaign, urging him to "stand firm" on the Sudan issue. Mr. Hervey Rhodes, who took this step (routine in the United States but unprecedented for Britain), retained his seat, but Labor lost several seats in the same area.

But these regional shifts were not decisive. The "swing" was pronounced all over the country, and the main reason why the election result was so predictable has to do with the social homogeneity of Britain and the relative maturity of the electorate.

It may sound odd to talk of homogeneity in a country where class distinctions are as sharp as they are in Britain, but the fact is that the class structure is not closely mirrored in the voting. Both parties, though in unequal proportion, contain large chunks of all social classes, and changes are usually brought about by shifts at the margin, where that ominous being, the "floating voter," resides. Though Labor organizers dislike having to admit it, about 30 per cent of the working class—among them a large proportion of women—habitually vote Tory. Conversely, a sizable fraction of the middle class —especially the "salariat"—has in recent years been won over to a moderate brand of socialism. The dissolution of the Liberal party has accentuated this process of turning each of the two great parties into a fairly representative cross section of the community, at any rate so far as voting strength goes. The organization and control of the two rival machines is another matter.

With the country split neatly down the middle, both parties need the support of those moderate voters (people of moderate means and owners of moderate political opinions) who traditionally found their political expression in the Liberal party. Its disintegration made it certain that the two great parties would drive as closely as possible towards the center of the road. It also insured that the final result would turn upon the decision of a relatively small number of relatively well-informed people (Liberals have a higher average of political understanding than the followers of the two mass parties have). As it turned out, more Liberals shifted to the right than to the left, and Labor after six years found itself out of office. But until the last, Labor's propagandists stressed Mr. Attlee's "calm" and Mr. Morrison's "moderation," as against the flamboyancy of the Tory leader and his supposed warlike inclinations ("Whose finger do you want on the trigger? Attlee's or Churchill's?"), in the hope of winning over the maximum number

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of Liberal waverers; and the rise in Labor's popular voting strength to almost fourteen million (49 per cent of the total) shows that within limits they were successful. Under strict proportional representation Mr. Churchill would have failed in his bid to recover power. Fortunately for Britain and the world, strict proportional representation, like other rational insanities, is not part of the British tradition.

UNDERNEATH the order, quiet, and decorum which—to the stunned surprise of visiting European and American journalists—rendered the election campaign almost invisible and inaudible, political passions ran deep. In a quietly murderous fashion, the British can be just as intense about their politics as other people.

To be sure, the game was played according to the rules. Nobody was deprived of the vote, election displays were held down to a ridiculously low level by law, and no party was allowed more motor cars than the others, though horse-drawn vehicles could be used *ad libitum* to transport voters to the polling stations. No one dreamed of interfering with the Communists (who ran ten candidates and received a total of 21,000 votes), and the Communist party candidate at Woodford, who polled 871 votes against more than 40,000 for Winston Churchill and over 22,000 for the Labor candidate, was accorded the customary privilege of addressing the crowd, with Mr. Churchill standing beside him, after the result had been declared. Tradition demanded it, and tradition is sacred.

Yet the campaign at times sank to a disturbingly low level, even apart from the general tendency to advertise party nostrums instead of honestly facing economic facts. One low point was reached when Mr. Morrison, in his broadcast, spoke of Mr. Churchill having "almost rubbed his hands" over the prospect of trouble between Britain and Egypt. That was an elaboration, as calculated as it was mean and unworthy, of the demagogic "warmonger" theme. Mr. Morrison has been unfortunate in this election. It is not merely that the broad strategy of Labor's campaign was mainly his responsibility, but his own contribution, both as Foreign Secretary and as party leader, had a great deal to do with the defeat. Abadan and Iran generally may not have meant much to the working class—though it shook many Labor stalwarts, who loyally swallowed their doubts—but it thoroughly alarmed the Liberals, already disturbed by Labor's parochial outlook upon European problems. The *Manchester Guardian,* hitherto Labor's staunch friend, was particularly scathing in its comment, though it rightly placed a large part of the blame on the Anglo-Iranian Company and the hierarchy of the Foreign Office. Then came Mr. Morrison's broadcast, which the *Guardian,* with considerable understatement, called "a regrettable performance." It was in fact a public revelation of the Foreign Secretary's unfitness for the post he had occupied since the retirement of Ernest Bevin—who in retrospect appeared as a lumbering giant by the side of his puny successor.

It is difficult to convey the precise flavor of Morrisonian eloquence, but lack of dignity is a large ingredient in it. The Foreign Secretary contemptuously dismissed Mr. Churchill as an outmoded old gentleman, a sort of Palmerstonian relic, and then went on to claim, in the very process of sinking into a sea of Middle Eastern troubles, that "Labor understands this new world" of insurgent nationalism in the East. "Mr. Morrison is talking humbug, and it is to be feared he knows it," commented the *Guardian.* "He should never make boasts he cannot justify and he should not try to conduct British foreign policy in election speeches." Alas, Mr. Morrison, who is the most professional of politicians (Aneurin Bevan once called him "a third-rate Tammany boss"), was quite unable to understand why he should not. It was particularly unfortunate that his broadcast was timed for the night after Dr. Charles Hill, the "Radio Doctor," had gone on the air to present the Tory viewpoint to a large audience appreciative of Cockney humor. The Doctor, a popular broadcaster on subjects such as tonsils and tired feet, also does a political burlesque act

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for the Tories at election time. It was a shock to millions of listeners when on the following night Mr. Herbert Morrison—another Cockney, but lacking the Doctor's gift for popular entertainment—talked in somewhat the same strain. The British expect something else from their Foreign Secretaries.

The speech in any case cost Morrison the lingering respect of those Liberals who had supported him in preference to Bevan, and they know that if and when Mr. Attlee (who is sixty-eight) relinquishes the leadership of the party, the choice will lie between the flamboyant orator from Wales and this pert little Londoner who made his debut in municipal politics and should have stayed there for his own and everyone else's good.

With a choice between Morrison and Bevan in prospect, it is important to ask: how strong is the "left" within the Labor party? It is perhaps significant that Mr. Richard Crossman, who suffers from a suppressed yearning to side with the big battalions, has confidently announced that within twelve months the Bevanite program will become that of the Labor party as a whole. In support of this prognostication he offers two pieces of evidence: the success of Mr. Bevan's handful of associates in terms of popular votes, and the fact that in the course of the campaign a good many orthodox Laborites tended to adopt bits and pieces of the Bevanite platform.

Now there is no doubt that a demand for fewer arms and more social services is popular with the voters (including many who vote Conservative) and that the half-dozen prominent Bevanites profited from this fact. It can also be surmised that Labor in opposition will tend to make the most of popular resistance to any cuts in the standard of living that may be dictated by the rearmament program or by sheer economic necessity. To that extent, the party as a whole is bound to come somewhat closer to the position occupied by Mr. Bevan and his friends. Indeed, from what Mr. Churchill has been up to since taking office, it would almost seem as if it were the fate of the Tories to carry out the Bevanite program!

But it is only when this position is identified with what is vaguely called "neutralism" or "anti-Americanism" that any serious problem arises at all. That the rearmament program may be too big, or that the social services must be maintained at their present not very brilliant level, or that the United States should make a bigger financial contribution to NATO—these are, after all, perfectly reasonable propositions, and one of the first acts of Mr. Churchill's government has been to present precisely these arguments to Washington, and in a more uncompromising fashion than was done by Labor! * In this circumstance, the Labor party as a whole, and the "left" in particular, will have to shift the direction of their attack. Will they come out against the Atlantic orientation as such?

Not even Mr. Bevan has suggested that they should. The group of genuine "neutralists" in the Labor party clusters around the *New Statesman and Nation*, not the London *Tribune*, where Mr. Bevan and his friends clamor fortnightly for a bolder socalist policy without indicating very clearly what they have in mind. From across the Atlantic these two periodicals may seem to display an occasional family likeness, but there is all the difference between a middle-class "popular front" journal and a genuine organ of the left wing within the Labor party. It is the Labor "militants," and not the crypto-Stalinist "liberals," who look to Mr. Bevan. It is they who were responsible for his triumph at the party conference at

* Mr. Churchill is in favor of the closest Anglo-American cooperation, but he also shares the traditional Tory inclination toward a strong and independent foreign policy. It must be borne in mind that the Tory party has always been suspicious of American influence in Britain's overseas empire, and that the grant of freedom to India, for which American policy pressed hard, was made over Mr. Churchill's objections. There is no doubt that the new government will insist more vigorously than its predecessor on full American support for Britain's position in the Middle East, while resisting, at least as determinedly as Labor, America's demands for unqualified endorsement of *her* Far Eastern policy.

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Scarborough, where he topped the poll (as he had indeed done for five years) in the voting for the section of the Executive which is elected by the so-called constituency parties—i.e., of the individual Labor party members, now more than one million, as against the five million trade unionists affiliated *en bloc*. These men and women don't read the *New Statesman*, have no particular bias against America, are deeply distrustful of the Soviet Union, and on the whole agree that the West must be ready to defend itself. But they want something that they would probably describe, rather vaguely, as "a democratic working-class policy," and they are skeptical of the party's official leadership, which strikes them as hidebound and unduly weighted in favor of the trade union bureaucracy. It is this which makes them so ready to vote for the candidates of the "left" at the annual party conference. Indeed they have done so for the past twenty years. Only there has never before been so much international interest in their votes.

THE emotional radicalism of the constituency parties is basically related to their confused yearning for something which they vaguely think of as "real" socialism, but which they do not know how to get, or even how to define. Unless this state of mind is grasped, all subsequent judgments tend to go astray. It was this emotional yearning for the promised land which for years made Labor sentimentally pro-Soviet. Now that disillusionment with the Soviet "experiment" has seeped through from the top to the bottom layers of the party, the dream takes the form of a desire to build the perfect socialist society in the British Isles and let the rest of the world go its own way. This emotional Little Englandism runs through the whole Labor movement, but is naturally strongest on the left. Mr. Attlee paid tribute to it when, at the close of the Scarborough conference, he evoked Blake's vision of the struggle "till we have built Jerusalem in England's green and pleasant land." It was the only time he managed to express some emotion, and the delegates duly responded. But it is the Welsh spellbinder who touches their heartstrings. That, and not "anti-Americanism," is the secret of his power.

If the constituency parties vote "left" because they vaguely want something they don't quite know how to describe, the trade union bosses lean to the "right" because they distrust the sentimental follies of the socialist "militants" and the doctrinaire outlook of the intellectuals. Here again, Labor is the prisoner of its past. In a sense the party has never got over the shock of 1931, when Ramsay MacDonald sold out to the Tories. Ever since then, the union leaders have insisted on having control. Gradually, over the years, a conviction has grown up in their minds that in the last resort no one else can be trusted to keep the Labor party on an even keel. The unions worked hard to bring the party into being and turn it into a mass force. Again and again they have seen the middle-class politicians at its head, the socialist "militants" and the intellectual doctrinaires, go off on a wild-goose chase. They had to pull the wreck together after MacDonald smashed the party in 1931. Thereafter for years they had to battle the sentimental pacifists, the Popular Fronters, the pro-Communists, and now finally the neutralists. The fight against pacifism was not won until 1935, when Ernest Bevin drove the aged Lansbury from the party leadership. Since 1945, the challenge has come, not from emotional pacifism, but from neutralism, crypto-Stalinism, and "third force" romanticism. By now the union bosses have become wary. They are willing to let the intellectuals talk nonsense, and the parliamentarians play politics; they are even willing to let the constituency parties blow off steam at the annual party conference. But ultimately they insist on having control.

It was the challenge to their control of the party machine, implicit in the second Bevanite pamphlet issued just before the Scarborough conference, which infuriated them and made them talk of "split" and "expulsion." Until their hostility is overcome, Bevan cannot hope to lead the party.

Foreign observers who wonder whether

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the Labor party in opposition will turn "Marxist" in its emphasis on the class struggle tend to forget that at present it is not even socialist. Mr. Attlee and Mr. Morrison are exponents of the Welfare State and of just enough planning to make it work. Even this degree of planning has proved irksome to the unions and the working class in general. Although the unions prefer a Labor government to a Tory one—after all, the Labor party is their own creation—they would certainly prefer a moderately conservative government that does not demolish the Welfare State to a really socialist government committed to full-scale planning, including a "national wages policy" and, ultimately, direction of labor by the state. If Mr. Bevan, who is a genuine socialist, should become the leader of the Labor party, it is doubtful that he—and the middle-class socialist intelligentsia he represents—could do anything very radical, shackled as they would be by the weight of the trade union movement. And with the economic situation what it is, a Bevanite regime might find itself hard put even to think of something radical to do.

The Tory government, by adopting an anti-union policy, could drive the trade unions into Bevan's arms, but there is little prospect of that. The Conservative majority is too narrow to permit any tampering with the Welfare State or any challenge to the unions. If the Conservative party wants to stay in business it must accept in the main the "Labor revolution" of the past six years. That issue is already settled and everyone knew it even before Mr. Richard Butler announced his new austerity program, which hits mainly at the privileges of the well-to-do (expensive tinned meats, trips abroad, etc.).

There will be some redistribution of the national income in favor of the middle class, but not much, and big business is likely to find itself as savagely mulcted as before. The new Chancellor of the Exchequer has already given notice that he will soon introduce an excess profits tax, and the Beaverbrook press is beginning to clamor for a capital gains tax on the American model. The demagogic, lower-middle-class wing of Toryism which Beaverbrook represents has in recent years strengthened its hold on the party. It will be amusing, in the months to come, to watch the attitude of the *Economist* and the *Financial Times*—the two organs of classical economics. They are likely before very long to turn some of their constitutional irritability upon Mr. Churchill. The Conservative party is not going to commit suicide to please the doctrinaires of "the City" (equivalent to the American "Wall Street") who are convinced that only a sharp dose of unemployment and the abolition of the food subsidies will "bring the workers to their senses." When this realization has sunk in, we shall doubtless hear a great deal about the cowardice of democratic governments and the insatiable appetite of democratic electorates.

THE fact is that the British standard of living cannot be significantly depressed without pushing millions below the extreme poverty line from which they have only emerged during the past fifteen years. It is here that one encounters the real justification of the six years of Labor rule. A good part of the improvement that has taken place is of course simply due to full employment, starting with the war years; but the process has been extended into the postwar period. In 1935 a survey in the typical community of York, carried out by Mr. Seebohm Rowntree and others, showed that one-sixth of the population was below the poverty line. In 1950 the same investigators found that the proportion had been cut to less than 2 per cent—mainly aged people.

Apart from the reduction of extreme poverty, the main change has been in the direction of evening out differences within the working population. The total "consumable cake," averaged over the whole community, has probably for two years now been about as big as it was in 1938, but its distribution has been different: more of it is taken in ways determined by public policy, less by individual purchases in the free market. Counting all "social transfer payments" (so-

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cial security, food and rent subsidies, free school meals, etc.) the part of the consumable income distributed by public policy has risen from 12 per cent in 1938 to 18 per cent in 1950 and almost the whole of this transfer has benefited the lower-income groups. Some of the benefits are now being eroded by the rise in prices, but the principle of making real incomes less unequal than money incomes has come to stay. In addition, the lower incomes have been raised by full employment and higher wages for the unskilled, while the higher incomes have been brought down by the relatively slower rise in professional, business, and investment earnings. The professional class has been hardest hit, but even this group cannot expect much alleviation from Conservative rule. It would have to come through lower taxation and there simply is no financial scope for that.

It must be recognized that the British economic problem is not soluble unless there is a sharp and general rise in productivity. The notion that the "consumable cake" can be so divided as to leave enough for a decent welfare minimum, mounting exports, and rearmament at the present rate, is an economist's fantasy. It can be done on paper, but in terms of social reality no government can go very far along this road unless it is prepared to forego all form of civil investment. But the Conservatives are already committed to a larger house-building program, extension of the present school program, and substantial capital investment in the colonies. It is one thing to let the value of the social services and the consumers' dollar depreciate through the gradual rise in prices: even the Labor government had begun to do that, and the Conservative need only continue. It is quite another thing to free real resources for the export drive and the rearmament program. This is not a financial problem but a matter of raising output and improving the level of productivity.

The question is whether British productivity, which failed to rise sufficiently under a Labor government, will go up faster under Conservative rule. To this, even ardent Tories hesitate to give any positive answer.

It is an indisputable fact that British industrial output is a good deal lower than it would be if all concerned really put their shoulder to the wheel. But the change in social climate required for this purpose is of a kind which outsiders can grasp only with difficulty. The situation is worst in the building industry, where output per man-hour is probably 30 per cent below pre-war, and among the dockers, who are now taking their revenge for decades of low pay, high unemployment, and general neglect; but it runs right through the whole structure. Both unions and employers have for fifty years put a brake on productivity. They are now being urged to bestir themselves in a hurry, but changes in social habits, if they are of such magnitude as this, take time.

Under Labor rule the unions did make an effort to adopt a new and positive attitude toward production, and not only in the nationalized industries. It cannot be said that they went all-out, or that they were conspicuously successful in changing the outlook of their members where they tried, but some progress was made. Unless it continues at a faster rate, Britain is in for an extremely thin time. With a Conservative government in office, the instinctive reaction of the workers will be to hold back, although on the other hand there is likely to be some gain in managerial efficiency where private enterprise had previously developed a grudge against the "bureaucrats." It would take a really big and dramatic gesture on the part of Mr. Churchill's government to break down the workers' ingrained conviction that the Tory party is there to defend the sectional interests of big business. One may reasonably doubt whether such a gesture, which the younger and more intelligent Tories have been urging for years, is within the realm of practical politics.

It is against this background that one must consider Labor's chances of further internal growth and development. On the face of it they are not bad. The party has done

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remarkably well, all things considered, in the recent election. It has polled a record vote and executed an orderly retreat instead of the rout predicted by its opponents. There is none of the demoralization that followed the disaster of 1931. There is even some quiet satisfaction that it is now the Conservatives' turn to face the coal shortage, the meat shortage, and above all the dollar shortage. It is generally felt, not without reason, that the next swing of the pendulum will bring Labor back to power with a substantial majority. But the awkward question remains: will it make much difference?

If Labor were to return to power, even under Aneurin Bevan, what could it do? Is the Labor party capable, at the next opportunity, of going beyond the Welfare State—and if so, to what? Is it really feasible to introduce into modern industrial society a form of "workers' control" in industry, as the "left" urges? Will the unions respond to the call for higher productivity? Can the profound conservatism of the British working class be overcome? These awkward questions are now being asked by many socialists in this country. Another question, chiefly asked by former Liberals who would like to support Labor but are appalled by its insularity, is: will the next Labor government be as parochial in its attitude to Europe and the world as the one that just left office?

It is all very well to talk of the "grant of freedom to India," which anyhow was an old Liberal stand-by; the fact remains that since 1945 Britain has gradually been pushed to the northwestern fringe of Europe, insulted by countries like Persia and Egypt, and increasingly passed over by the policy-makers in Washington. It will be one of the most important tasks of the Churchill government to reverse this trend—in the interest of America as well as Britain, for present American policy suffers from excessive reliance upon none too stable regimes in Europe and elsewhere. Here is a field where Labor's failure has been unusually big and dramatic. Yet although the failure is vaguely sensed (it explains much of the response to the Bevanite revolt), there is no indication that its lessons are being learned—least of all by the Bevanites! Their recent pamphleteering efforts have been as vague and woolly as anything produced by Mr. Morrison's helpers. Indeed the real weakness of this group is not its "anti-Americanism"—which has been vastly overstressed by American reporters—but, to reiterate, its isolationism.

On such basic issues as how to confront nationalist revolt in the Middle East or military challenge in Europe, there is not much to choose between Morrisonians and Bevanites, apart from differences in vocabulary. Mr. Bevan may be more of a Little Englander (although it is difficult to believe that he would have wasted time over the Festival of Britain while the Persians were occupying Abadan), but the two wings of the movement have more in common than their leaders imagine. To an objective observer, they look pretty much alike, with their vague, amiable internationalism joined to a rooted dislike of "foreigners," their desire to do something for "the backward areas of the world" joined to a determination to put the British living standard first.

In their own way, the Tories, who don't talk much about helping other people (and frankly don't particularly want to), are much more clearly aware of what goes on in the world, though their vision is rather narrow and takes insufficient account of social imponderables. They know, for example, that in the last resort Labor was defeated by world conditions, and they are determined not to get caught in the same trap. They are also aware (although, unlike the Bevanites, they keep their thoughts to themselves) that the expansion of American world power is in some ways dangerous to Britain, and they have their doubts about the capacity of Washington's policy-makers to guide the struggle against Communism. For the next few years one can reasonably expect British foreign and home policy to be characterized by a certain tough realism. In some ways it could be a refreshing experience.

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SEVEN PROFESSORS LOOK AT THE JEWISH STUDENT

A Symposium

IT IS not surprising that "The Jewish College Student: 1951 Model" by Morris Freedman, in the October COMMENTARY, has provoked wide discussion. The inner resources and the future quality of American society have been subjects of much concern in recent years; and American Jews, in addition to sharing this concern, are speculating on the prospects for survival of the Jewish community and for continuance of the Jewish heritage in this country. Little wonder, then, that Mr. Freedman's report on current trends in today's generation of Jewish students should be searched for omens and predictions.

The interest aroused by Mr. Freedman's article has prompted us to ask seven college teachers—all of whom were, after all, once college students themselves—for their commentaries on the subject.

In the editorial note accompanying the article, we had posed the problem in the following way: "In recent years, it has seemed to many that the classical type of Jewish student, the passionately devoted searcher after wisdom and learning, has been dying out; and it is often charged that the contemporary Jewish student takes a cool view toward the eternal values his forefathers sought. Is this merely a malicious illusion of middle age in the face of youth? Or is it in accord with the facts?"

For this symposium, assuming that the Jewish student of today has indeed changed significantly from his father of the 20's or his elder brother of the 30's, we asked our contributors to comment on such questions as: In what direction have the Jewish students changed? Have they changed more, or less, than their fellow students? And if it is true that the typical Jewish student is more and more becoming an authentic "Joe College," is not something irreplaceable—and uniquely Jewish—being lost?

Not unexpectedly, the answers differ. But each does in its own way throw some light on the subject—and, of course, none pretends to say even the next to the last word.—ED.

Samuel Middlebrook: Perhaps the "Jewish college student" exists. Every so often in my fifteen years at the City College of New York, people have talked to me about him. And now my gifted colleague, Mr. Morris Freedman, has sketched him in some five thousand words—sketched him, annotated him, given him a local habitation and a name.

But I'm sorry. I still don't see him. Despite all the sprightly anecdotes, the statistics, the incisive and quotable sentences, the obvious sincerity of the author, I think he is dealing with a wraith. My reasons follow.

There are college students who call themselves Jews. There are college students whom others call Jews. But the "Jewish college student" strikes me as on a par with the Jewish baseball fan; his Jewishness is in each case irrelevant.

Consider Mr. Freedman's opening anecdote about the mother of that "Paul Bunyan of Jewish intellectuals," Professor Morris Raphael Cohen. She would have washed floors in order to send her boy to college. I have known mothers who not only would wash floors to give their children an education but actually did so. They happened not to be Jews.

Consider the author's "composite image of the City College student," whom he claims to be "the typical Jewish student in America during the 20's and 30's." He is, says Mr. Freedman: "an argumentative intellectual, a sometimes brilliant, loquacious, rather truculent young man, who is partial to radical politics, disrespectful of authority, and whose erudition is as catholic as it is occasionally superficial." This sentence is a thumbnail sketch of those well-known Jews, George Bernard Shaw, Bertrand Russell, Thomas Paine, and Percy Shelley!

What starts out to be a psychograph of "the Jewish college student" in Mr. Freedman's article soon narrows down by a bit of hocus-pocus to a personalized chronicle of CCNY supported by statistics prepared by a dean concerning the students of Brooklyn College—a study in which all questions of religion or race were left out. Mr. Freedman calls their omission "honorably motivated"

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but "pointless." Not pointless at all. It is illegal in New York State for our municipal colleges to inquire into such matters—such inquiries are irrelevant and have in the past led to social mischief.

Mr. Freedman calls the students at CCNY in the 30's "the select of the select," and the burden of his article seems to be that they have got worse ever since. He was himself, I know, one of those golden boys; but he laments his successors; in other words he talks like an all too recognizable kind of Old Grad, or like an enthusiastic young professor shocked to find what a small minority really share his tastes and insight.

Now I came to CCNY in the same year as did Mr. Freedman, though as a teacher, I must admit, not a freshman. But I did not find "the bulk of the students" (horrid phrase!) to be passive Communists then or later. An undetermined number of young men who saw Red at that time only proved themselves to be green; they were noisy but not really numerous; they were imitating on the campus what they read about or saw in the world outside. If some Jewish Communists at the college and elsewhere changed their names, I suspect that it was in part due to zealous imitation of Stalin, Lenin, Molotov, and others of the Kremlin coterie who changed theirs. It was not, of course, a specifically Jewish phenomenon.

Students today are responding to the diverse pressures of environment as they have always responded, according to their temperament, abilities, and opportunities, but not, so far as I can see, according to their Jewishness or lack of it. At City College, which figures so intricately in Mr. Freedman's article, far more relevant forces than religious background are at work. Situated in New York and upon the Eastern seaboard, where private colleges have consciously sought to maintain the appeal of exclusiveness, social desirability, athletic prestige, etc., City College pioneered for another ideal: the college career open to (intellectual) talents alone.

I have studied, taught, or lived for extended periods on the campuses of seven other colleges and universities of our country from here to California. At all of them I have known good students, mediocre students, atrocious students, the bone-lazy, the confused, the industrious, the brilliant. But "The Jewish Student: 1951 Model" is to me a new brand—or rather all these old brands under a new name-plate.

Why should this be so? Perhaps because 95 per cent of undergraduate work today can have no denominational or sectarian label. There is neither Jewish nor Gentile theory or practice of the semicolon; there is no Jewish dissection of frogs, no Jewish equation that $e = mc^2$. There are, of course, Jewish history and literature—or should I say history of the Jews and writings by them? But most of my present students, 80 per cent Jewish as they may be by Mr. Freedman's count, are obdurately, invincibly ignorant in that department.

One noted sentence from such writings occurs to me now: "Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels." I regard the *Jewish* college student (as Mr. Freedman seems to conceive him) as I now regard an angel: I am ready to believe that others believe he exists. But no more than that.

Everett C. Hughes: On the second day of my teaching career a good half of those who had been there on the first day were absent from my classes. Thus I became aware of Jewish students as a special category. They were celebrating the fall holidays. I had never, when I was graduated from college, known any person whom I identified as a Jew. Nor had I in my head any conception of a "Jewish student." Although there were a good many Jews in graduate school at the University of Chicago, and although I knew them as fellow students and friends, I cannot conjure up any recollection of a category, "Jewish student," from that time. Thus those Jewish students who stayed away from my classes at McGill University (Montreal, Canada) in the late 1920's created the category in my mind.

Sociology was new at McGill, and associated in people's minds with a small school of social service which had been there first. We didn't get the pick of students, Christian or Jewish, in our courses at first. The brightest Jewish boys were either taking honors in economics with an eye on law, or were premeds. But we soon got a fine lot of girls in our courses: bright, competent, moderately

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hard-working, well-mannered, and well-dressed. Jew and Christian alike, they admired and emulated their successful parents, but were trying to escape some cramping orthodoxy. Some sought to expiate their parents' social and economic sins by doing social service or by supporting liberal movements. The Jewish girls were just a little more eager, but perhaps a little less neurotic than the Protestant girls. They did well at school, but not so well as to prevent them from marrying soon after graduation. Not one of them was really an intellectual; nor were their brothers, the Jewish boys who were winning prizes and scholarships in economics, law, and medicine.

Eventually, some Jewish boys took honors (the specialized sequence) in sociology. Although they had to be bright and hard-working to make honors, they were a cut below the girls in ability and in social background. They were from the poorer North End. The very first one of them was the son of an immigrant teacher and rabbi. He wanted sociology and anthropology to help him rationalize his revolt against the orthodoxy of his father, by proving that all religion is a swindle invented by designing priests to exploit decent people like his parents. Most of the Jewish boys had some such problem.* Sociology was a form of discourse that would help them win some argument with papa, or with the presumably hostile, anti-Semitic world. Or it was to furnish a career alternative to the one favored by parents.

When I left McGill and came to teach in the much older department of sociology at the University of Chicago, I found a large number of Jewish students for whom this subject was accepted as the basis for academic or public careers. But I still had, and have, the impression that sociology is for many of them an answer to some personal problem, a phase of some argument with parents, the world, or with themselves. Lately, we have been getting youngsters who are struggling to emancipate themselves from the pressure to go to Israel, from the deeply inculcated belief that youth in America is only a preparation for life on cooperative farms there. They cast off the spell of Zionist youth leaders in camps and clubs by writing "objective" term papers in sociological language, just as Kim saved himself by repeating the multiplication table firmly in English when Lurgan Sahib tried to hypnotize him in Hindi.

But is this something peculiar to Jewish students? I don't think so. Sociology seems to thrive on personal marginality. It is, perhaps, the mentality of a phase of emancipation; that phase in which the individual is compelled or impelled to look in two or several directions at once. One looks back, longingly and perhaps angrily, at what his father, if not himself, was. He looks outward at other worlds. If he can bear to look well in the several directions, and if he can let associations come up freely into his conscious mind from the two or more worlds he sees, he may become a keenly perceptive observer of men and their ways. If his view is blocked in either direction by too much anxiety, he will "sociologize" in a cynical or defensive way, pass the written examinations handsomely, and turn his back on empirical, sympathetic but penetrating observation of people as they are.

The colleges and universities of this country are full of the half-emancipated children of parents of more ethnic groups and strange sects than ever got into any one country at the same time (unless India be the exception —and the solution there was the caste-community system). Some of them have just gone tolerantly slack, and head for the round-up at the coke bar. But others are made self-conscious and uncomfortable about who they are and what they are called upon to do to justify the education which their parents make such sacrifice to get for them. These are the ones we teachers of sociology get. The Jews among them are, in my experience, simply the "more so" case, the litmus paper that shows us what bothers and moves American college students in general. What will happen to sociology when Jewish (and other) students no longer have any argument with

* I remember the boy who was afraid to shave at home on certain days because his father would not like it, but was equally afraid to turn up on campus unshaven. One time he saw an ad about the demonstration of a new electric razor in a big department store. He stopped there and got shaved free—only to be mortified by seeing some of his classmates among the spectators. He always came to me right after such things with the bitter question, "Why do I do these things?" He eventually got a good education trying to answer that question.

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their parents or themselves, I don't know. I suspect that there is enough tension and ambivalence left in America to keep up intellectual curiosity about the social processes yet awhile. I still find plenty of Jewish students (whose Jewishness is almost invariably talked of with me in a "taken-for-granted-so-let's-talk-about-it" way) whose intellectual enthusiasms and curiosities mesh with my own.

David Riesman: Reading Mr. Freedman's paper, I was reminded of how many other ethnic types, robbed in America of traditional Old World norms and restraints, plunged into solitary careers of what is known in factories as "rate-busting." The Jewish student who rationalized his life to the point where all other activities besides study were subordinated to the accumulation of knowledge, or the quest for a grade, may be compared to the Polish steel worker or Italian track-layer or Japanese truck farmer who had lost, under the new conditions, all conventional and group-enforced limits on hours and pace of work. This type of Jewish student was, then, the intellectual analogue of Economic Man, and has met the same fate when, with the coming of unions and the integration of the immigrant into American life, effective sanctions can be brought to bear on the DAR ("damned average-raiser"), and effective rewards for social solidarity offered to the previously isolated. So passes from the campus area, too, the "unfair" competition of the immigrant worker.

As Mr. Freedman observes, this isolate, freeing himself from family and kin, looked to his academic teachers for models as to how to behave in the new setting and, in frequent disappointment, turned from them into a career of resentful rebellion. But this was not the only outcome. At least outside New York, the eager Jewish student before and after the First World War might have the good luck to encounter upper-class teachers who welcomed his intellect and sought to soften his manners, to make a gentleman—and therefore a scholar—out of him. For these teachers from the upper social strata did not feel threatened in their own class position by having to teach a few Jewish students; rather, having entered teaching because of a love of learning, they could feel Jews as kindred spirits and enjoy the polishing of rough diamonds. Indeed, the very moral and intellectual experimentalism of the Jews might be attractive (as compared, say, with similarly eager Anglo-Saxon students) because Jews from immigrant families were often viewed by non-Jewish intellectuals as a sort of cover for their own emancipation (the history of Jews as fronts for Christians in America and vice versa has still to be written). At any rate, the Jewish student under these circumstances, unable to find intellectual peers in his home circle, was brought into citizenship in the republic of learning under the sponsorship of cultivated men and women for whom his development was one of the rewards of their teaching.

Today, however, as teaching becomes increasingly the monopoly of people of lower-middle-class origin in search of status and security, the Jewish student finds himself taught by those who may serve as models of career success but not as models of a cultivated life of learning. In fact, as Mr. Freedman describes matters, many of these teachers will themselves be Jews who in turn have been deprived of the opportunity of exposure to such models. Such students can form themselves neither by rebellion against aristocratic ways nor by imitating them; they can only imitate each other, or their slightly older counsellors who are teaching them.

The unhappy result is that the integration into American life which Mr. Freedman describes is only partial: the students are several removes or academic generations away from the American humanistic tradition of lightly held learning, as this flowered in New England or among the Quakers, and in parts of the South and the Midwest. Paradoxically, the versatile Jewish student of earlier generations—such as Morris Cohen or Felix Frankfurter or many others who could be named—was far less alienated in this sense.

So PERHAPS it is true, as Mr. Freedman's paper suggests, that the phenomenon is slowly drawing to an end in the Western world of the boy of lowly class origin who in his lifetime amasses the entire cultural capital of his age. For the leap from rags to riches was not only a pecuniary one: intangible goods of the spirit were acquired no less voraciously and excitingly. As the general level of educa-

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tion rises, and the individual level of aspiration falls in the way Mr. Freedman describes, such Horatio Alger heroes of the intellect may become less frequent. In the ensuing homogeneity, I fear we shall all be the losers.

Yet it is too early to know whether such homogeneity must be the inevitable outcome of the leveling process. We may find other bases for difference, such as individual variants of character and temperament, to replace the enforced differences of earlier ethnic modes of social stratification. Many students, moreover, starting from plateaus of relative security, may attain peaks no less high than those gained from the sea level of immigrant poverty in an earlier day. This is less spectacular, but the new climber has the advantage of not needing to lose sight of all other values in a single-minded pursuit of learning.

Also, there is no reason to assume that a business career is necessarily less intellectually challenging than academic and professional life. There is a tendency—now a full generation old, in my observation—for the sons of the wealthy to desert business for the arts and other presumably unworldly careers; today in many circles business is considered almost as unconventional as art once was.

Precisely because we are rapidly eroding our readiest source of variety in American life—namely, our ethnic heritages—we must guard against closing off any career lines, such as business, as possible lures to the imagination. That students are so readily persuaded, both by their peers and by their teachers, that business offers no careers to the imagination and the intellect, is perhaps another sign of their waning rebelliousness. And this brings us back again to the teacher-as-model, who can help to liberate students not only from the older parental pressures to enter business but also from the newer contrary pressures to view business as fit only for the uncreative, the self-indulgent, and the dispirited. This outlook is surely ironical for the Jewish student, for whom, as Mr. Freedman points out, many venturesome business careers are opening with the waning of prejudices—such as that against Jewish engineers—both within and outside the Jewish group.

Arnold W. Green: Mr. Freedman's excellent piece contains two emphases which in my opinion are at least overdrawn. First, it does not seem to me that there has ever been a clear-cut "Jewish student" type in this country. Second, Mr. Freedman describes City College in the 30's as if that time and place were an expression of Jewish ethos instead of what, again in my opinion, it was—a time and place. He correctly points out that intellectually, socially, and politically, the 30's are a distant age. But his half-regret and half-nostalgia for a time when tweed suits, parked cars, winning basketball teams, and middle-class respectability were all absent from City includes a tacit accusation that today's young American Jews have forsaken a Jewish intellectual tradition. If there is such a tradition in America, its roots are as thin as its flowering was short-lived.

Take the introductory remarks about Morris Cohen—there were giants in those days—which are used to make a contrast with the intellectually shoddy present. Actually, Cohen was not "typical" of anything—a time, a people, or a culture. He was one of that small band of dedicated intellectual geniuses that appear in every generation *in spite of* their era and their background. Cohen no more typified American Jews than William Graham Sumner typified American Protestants; Sumner's college classmates were corporation lawyers and stock-market riggers when he, after passing fifty, taught himself several new languages. Dedicated intellectual geniuses are probably as many, and as few, as they ever were, and no "tradition" produces them.

I HAVE no personal knowledge of City, but I attended Clark University, in Worcester, Massachusetts, during the 30's; and Mr. Freedman's description of the City College-that-was sounds just like home, the one difference being that at Clark about 40, not 80 per cent, of the student body was Jewish. The majority of students were urban "townies," they were almost without exception poor and had to work in their spare time to pay their tuition on installments. Many of the faculty preserved a humorous "tolerance" for the unbarbered hair and unshaven faces and dogmatic challenging attitudes of their students. Fraternities were a joke. There were few gentlemen, and the noisy Communist claque passed out handbills, petitions of pro-

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test, and organized "peace rallies." Clark students boasted that on Saturday nights the library was more crowded than the basketball game, and the cheering was always third-rate. Clark's winnowing process was not so severe as Mr. Freedman indicates City's was, but it was sufficiently rigorous to explain in part the self-conscious intellectuality of its students. Or was it intellectuality? In any event, they schemed and strove like Comanche warriors to lift more scalps than their fellows, in the form of grades.

With very few exceptions they, also, were first-generation collegians and second-generation Europeans, for whom literacy was a promise and a fulfilment. Minorities were in the majority: Jews, Swedes, Italians, and Poles, in that order. But, there was no "Jewish student." Intellectual "seriousness," radicalism of some kind or degree, a humorless determination to make high grades on examinations, scorn for the amenities, bitterness, these were characteristic of the entire student body at that time. A friend of mine who is now teaching at Clark assures me that the atmosphere has completely changed, in the direction that Mr. Freedman half deplores, and the proportion of Jewish students remains the same. The question I am raising is this: if some other impoverished minority had made up the bulk of City's student body during the 30's, would City's character have been much different? There is, of course, no way to test the hypothesis that it would have been the same, but the question deserves to be raised.

As A teacher in several institutions, I have simply failed to find the "Jewish student." The Jewish girls, like the other girls at the University of New Hampshire during the war, wore sloppy jeans and scuffed shoes, and during class read letters from their fiancés overseas. Later, at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, the wealthy Jewish boys in my classes, like the other wealthy boys, drove convertibles, drank heavily as a matter of principle, and never got assignments in on time. At American University, in Washington, where most of the students are Federal employees, the all-consuming interest is grades and degrees with which to secure a "higher rating." Here at Penn State, the campus life of fraternities, sports, dances, and the like dominates all students without discrimination. If I have *one* budding Jewish scholar in my classes at the present time, he keeps himself well hidden.

Was the intellectuality of the 30's (Jewish or otherwise) a "genuine" thing? Largely, I think, it was not. It was much less dedication than it was a personal defense reaction on the part of the intelligent dispossessed. At the same time, however, the importance of ideas went unquestioned by a much larger minority than today. There is little intellectual excitement among today's gifted and, yes, interested minority. Mr. Freedman attributes this change mainly to the "security" that the American collegian now finds in his career prospect. This has something to do with it, but more important, I feel, is that the faith of the 30's, that thinking makes a difference, is gone. The 30's was a terrible awakening from the American Dream, but it was also a time of vocal adventure deferred in action, a time when the young, intellectual or not, held the idea that rational thought and rational persuasion would somehow be transformed into collective action in the near future, and that human problems would be solved. Today's students discuss war, but they do not, like the students of the 30's, discuss ways to stop it. They discuss it as news, or as something that may happen to them, but not as a challenge. A few of today's students might be termed intellectuals, but their interest in ideas is a hobby; even these few show little earnestness in study, for they have little faith that ideas will ever help them to control their own destinies.

Lionel Trilling: Any understanding of the Jewish student as he used to exist, both in actuality and in legend, must begin with the awareness that he was not really, as we easily suppose, a unique phenomenon. The old fierce and largely competitive intellectual drive of the Jewish student, like so many traits which are thought of as specifically Jewish, is in part to be traced to the manners, habits, and traditions of Europe, or of a particular part of Europe, and often of a particular part of Europe at a particular time. And Europe as a whole has for many centuries had a more intense and competitive notion of the

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intellectual life than has ever obtained in America except possibly in the early days of Massachusetts.

The competitiveness which is inherent in the European tradition of intellectual conduct no doubt has its aspect of disinterestedness—it may be understood as arising from a sense of the passionateness which is appropriate to the mind, from a respect for what the mind can and properly should do. No doubt, too, we must take to be a sign of respect for mind the fact that in Europe men have long been able to gain great credit and even power by the exercise of their intellectual gifts. Since the days of Abelard, the populace of Paris has responded to intellectual triumphs with a vivacity that cannot be conceived in America (again early Massachusetts might be excepted). And from the days of Hegel up to the destruction of all intellectual life by the Nazis, the German professor had the possibility of an almost fantastic prestige. The life of Max Weber, for example, suggests a degree of social establishment which not even the most successful American professor would dream of.

It is perhaps true that the Orthodox Jews of Europe put a valuation on intellectual distinction in the mastery of the traditional Jewish knowledge that was especially high. Yet even this heroic estimate of intellect, which surely had its effect on Jewish habits even after the traditional knowledge had lost its hold upon the imagination, must be understood as but a part of the European attitude to learning and intellectual power. The hours of study, unthinkable to us, which the Talmudist required to fulfill his ideal probably did not exceed in number those which a German philologian felt he needed. And at least up to the war, even the secondary education of the middle and upper classes in most European countries required a degree of concentration and of accurate memory which we have never tolerated.

Then we must remember that the academic life of Europe was often more intimately connected with bureaucracy than it ever has been in this country, and that for members of the middle class and the lower middle class, success in examinations was one of the recognized roads to establishment in life. We should be less inclined to isolate a Jewish student type if we were more precisely aware of the kind of regimen of study through which an ambitious French boy puts himself, with the encouragement of his family and under the supervision of a physician, when he undertakes to win academic distinction and professional opportunity. It is not uncommon that his worn nerves and shattered spirit should lead him to think of failure as a good reason for suicide.

And we also have to take into account the special tendency of ethnic groups in a certain situation to make their way by means of the intellectual and quasi-intellectual professions. The determining situation seems to be that the group should have a strong tradition of respectability and ethnic pride, despite poverty and a degree of social inferiority to the dominant ethnic group. The case of Scottish intellectuality and devotion to study, quite as notable and legendary as the Jewish, is here in point.

If a change such as Mr. Freedman describes has really taken place, and I think it has, this is certainly in some part due, as Mr. Freedman suggests, to the growing acculturation of the Jewish group in America. The individual Jewish student is likely to be closer in type to the general image of the American student than his father was; his manners and habits distinguish him less from the generality; he is likely to make approximately the same estimate of his chances in the world; and he takes about the same attitude to his academic work—that is, among Jewish students there now tends to be the same distribution of indifference or commitment as among their non-Jewish classmates.

THERE is another factor in the change which I shall mention presently. But first I should like to raise a question about the elegiac assumption of Mr. Freedman's article and of the editorial note which introduces it. The editorial note speaks of the "classical Jewish student" as being "the passionately devoted searcher after wisdom." I have no doubt that many such students did exist and did represent an ideal of the Jewish tradition. But we must remember that whatever aura of disinterestedness may attend the intellectual life as it is lived in institutions, or whatever element of disinterestedness may actually be in it, the educational process in our culture, no less than in Europe although in

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a different way, is a recognized means of social advancement. It must submit to the same moral judgment we direct upon other ways of acquiring prestige. A somewhat greater degree of realism than usually attends the discussion of the "classical" Jewish student will remind us that a good deal of the old academic assiduity expressed itself as not much more than an accumulation of high marks, which were sought for the simplest practical reasons, or out of an almost mechanical competitiveness, or out of a kind of intellectual athleticism.

And even when the legendary Jewish student was—and indeed he often was—much more than a mark-accumulator, even when he thought of himself—as he often did—as a "devoted searcher after wisdom," it is not quite clear to me that his legendary way of going about his search was the best one possible. Perhaps the intellectual life cannot be lived without dispute and the acrimony that goes with dispute, and certainly in American universities the intellectual life is lived much too blandly. Still, we have to ask ourselves just how much store we really do set by the European way of carrying on the intellectual life, with its harshness and fierceness and bitterness—for the European way, as Mr. Freedman implies, was essentially the way of the "classical" Jewish student. Mr. Freedman makes Morris Raphael Cohen the hero of the old vanished Jewish student ideal. Although I am not one of those who respond, as so many do, to the quality of the late Professor Cohen's greatness, I am sure that he was, as so many say, a great man. Yet from what I know of Professor Cohen's way of carrying on the intellectual life, both in his classroom and in debate with his peers, he does not seem to me the best model for the intellectual life. It seems to me that there was a disproportion between the degree of his intellectual contentiousness and what it produced; and although I am not competent to judge his technical achievements in philosophy, it has often seemed to me that his contentiousness as well as his rigorous intellectuality led astray his opinions on other than technical matters.

I HAVE made reference to a circumstance, in addition to the acculturation of the Jewish student himself, which has helped to bring about the disappearance of anything that can now be thought of as a "type" of the Jewish student. This is the change in nature of the American college. So far as the "classical" Jewish student was a mere accumulator of marks, he did not necessarily show greater intelligence but perhaps only greater endurance and passivity than his fellows. But so far as he really was a "searcher after wisdom and learning," he very likely had the virtue of being able to take more seriously than even his teachers the subject matter of his courses. For I think that a true seriousness was not nearly so likely to have marked college teaching two or three or four decades ago as it does now. I would say that nowadays in most collegiate enterprises the teachers are both more devoted and more enlightened than they used to be. The humanistic emphasis is greater, and seems to the students to have a lively connection with actuality. I don't by this mean to give our colleges a clean bill of health, but I do think that in respect to having got rid of much that was merely routine and mechanical they have made considerable progress. The serious student is much more common than he used to be, and he is not necessarily a grind or brilliant. In such a situation the old Jewish seriousness and respect for learning do not appear as special and noteworthy traits.

And in general I think it is true that the intellectual life is more happily regarded in America than it used to be. The intellectual life seems now more available to more people than formerly and there is a tendency to think of the academic career as respectable and attractive. This is a tendency which is crowding and overcrowding our graduate schools and populating our writers' conferences and suchlike institutions. It is, incidentally, not at all easy to know how to judge this general movement, for its motive seems to have a certain negative element, a mere distaste for the active life and the "world." And it seems to bring with it a relaxation of intellectual standards of precision and industriousness and even to demand such a relaxation. But on the whole it is a promising thing, and it seems to me that the Jewish group has a proportionate part in it. Despite what Mr. Freedman reports of the indifference or hostility of City College students to the intellectual life, I

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have observed—as Mr. Freedman has—the considerable number of City College students who are devoting themselves to graduate study or who have in other ways devoted themselves to the intellectual life. And recently I have been struck by the number of well-heeled Jewish fathers, themselves without pretensions to intellectual interests, who have expressed to me their perfect willingness and even their satisfaction that their sons should be drawn to academic careers.

The change in the attitude of the colleges that I have described, as well as the general change in the attitude toward the intellectual life, have brought about a concomitant change in the intellectual virtues that are most prized. Intellectual distinction is as highly valued as it ever was, but its (as it were) quantitative aspect is not so highly regarded as it once was. I cannot remember ever having had a really good student, Jewish or not, who protested that a mark was not so high as he thought it should have been; to do so he would think quite below his dignity. High marks are, of course, not without their meaning, but the distinguished student is more likely to be interested in his teacher's response to his originality and creative promise. I must add that this interest, which seems so enlightened, can also have its corruptions.

I cannot resist saying a word about brilliant students in general. Popular feeling, in America at least, is always likely to be hostile to the intellectual gift; and this feeling can make its way more easily than is supposed into the academic life, where intellectual force and enthusiasm are often ironically regarded. The academic community must always be on guard against using any other criterion than intellectual power as demonstrated in intellectual accomplishment. The honors should go to the student with the best marks, and we ought always to resist the effort to make "character" or "leadership" or "activities" equal in value to scholarship. And yet it must be understood that there is no necessary correlation between undergraduate brilliance and actual intellectual accomplishment. It is not my impression that the most gifted of my students have done as well in the intellectual life as they gave me reason to expect, while some who have wearied me by their dullness or irritated me by their indifference have gone on to do admirable work. The circumstances in which the professional intellectual life is lived are very different from those of the classroom, and the qualities it needs are very different from those to which teachers usually respond. Which leads me to say that if we are inclined to find a sad significance in the passing of the old "classical" Jewish student, we ought to control our elegiac emotions by asking what part he emerged to play in the general intellectual life. And we ought also to ask what part in his own private life of later years his young fierce intellect grew up to have.

Ludwig Lewisohn: Before making any observations on Mr. Freedman's excellent article, it will be well to define the student body with which I have been working for seven semesters. Brandeis University, as is well known, is a Jewish foundation, secular in character. Its doors are open, needless to say, to students of intelligence and reasonable accomplishment without regard to ethnic or religious coloration. But no one who knows the structure and attitudes of our American society will be surprised at the fact that the overwhelming majority of our students are Jewish. They come to us as a matter of choice—not out of mere proximity—from twenty-seven states of the Union and from seven various lands, including Israel, England, Canada, France, Egypt, Liberia. Add the fact that out of a faculty of seventy this year forty-nine are Jews, and there arises the picture of a campus—the only campus outside the State of Israel—on which there are no anti-Semitic tensions, whether real or fancied.

Even so, human nature and Jewish nature forbade this from being, at least initially, an ideal situation. A number of students, especially among the earlier ones, entertained, whether consciously or not, the notion that under this absence of tensions and pressures they could retire to complete Jewish indifferentism. Boys and girls didn't have to go to Hillel for appropriate "dates." Since Hebrew was offered on the same basis as other languages, those who "took" it did so as unemphatically as others "took" French or Spanish or German. A very low spiritual temperature prevailed. But this temperature has risen

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measurably from year to year. Today, when more and more of the sons and daughters of affirmative Jewish families have joined our student body and a truly illustrious department of Hebraic and Judaistic studies functions, the temperature has attained a respectable warmth. Hillel functions and Intercollegiate Zionist Society functions are very well attended. Yet my first point of agreement with Mr. Freedman must be that this warmth rarely aspires to a degree beyond the very moderate. There is here, as elsewhere, a great rush toward the social sciences, which nowadays include psychology, and I record with agreement the quip of a witty faculty member: "The poor kids are looking for redemption and barking up the wrong tree." But they are, at least, seeking for redemption and meaning, though the right passion in the search is rare.

How well I recognize Mr. Freedman's description of the Jewish students of a certain period, though I was not actively teaching then—the argumentative, truculent, "radical" ones, the defenders, to the point of terrorism, of a sordid utopia into which they fled from their Jewishness and their Judaism, for the sake of which a few of them finally betrayed not only the polity that had nurtured them not without kindness but also their more intimate and sustaining sanctities. Ah no, I could not have taught in those days and, indeed, avoided doing so. I have not, as Mr. Freedman seems at least to have, a gleam of nostalgia for those brutal and sordid days. When I am a little put out by the mildness of temper of the majority of my students today I at once say to myself: they are at least not *that;* they have not at least sold themselves to seven pagan devils; they are at worst, at worst, *accessible to good.*

THEY would be more so—and this is a crucial point which Mr. Freedman omits—had they not been warped in their most plastic years by those public schools which, as a great Christian educator, Dr. Bernard Iddings Bell, declares, seem to aim at turning out mixtures of miniature Nietzsches and John Deweys; had they not learned to babble the brash false superficial answers to everything and been deprived of the right reverence for any mystery. Thus a quite intelligent student, being asked why he did not attend the High Holiday services on campus, replied that that would have been "so unmotivated" on his part. Another asked on a similar occasion: "Do you want me to be a hypocrite?" These answers bear out Dr. Bell's accusation. These students had been immersed in high school in a low-grade cocksureness. The riddles of the ages had been answered. *They,* these children, had vicariously mastered and sat in judgment on the accumulated wisdom and experience of the ages. They had found them wanting. So they played canasta (I suppose), not without a little bite of the worm of conscience, while the services were going on. I do not believe that these neither stupid nor ill-bred Jewish children would ever have fallen so low except for the abominable atmosphere of the public schools. In fact I know it. For the small minority of students who come to us from Jewish day schools, whether Orthodox, Conservative, or Yiddishist secular, are well taught. They have a reasonable insight into the difficulty of all problems, a decent reverence for both knowledge and wisdom; they can even write correct English. They are, above all, well-integrated personalities.

In brief, any description of the character and attitude of the Jewish college student of 1951 must include some attention to the influences he underwent before he came to college. Had his schooling been better, there would not even be that residuum of those who ask the question formulated by Mr. Freedman: "What good can composition and literature be to an accountant or businessman?" But indeed, on this campus, there are relatively few such. The required humanistic courses are followed with patience and interest even by future "pre-medics," chemists, sociologists; and the humanistic electives are cultivated by not a few whose future professional interests will be technological. No one, at all events, is ashamed of liking either poetry or philosophy. Indeed there is a pride, not passionate but genuine, in these studies and the accomplishments that grow from them. One repeats, one must repeat, the phrase "not passionate," and a certain mildness does indeed seem to characterize this college generation.

ARE the students "disturbed"? There was a flurry of dismay among the boys some months

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ago on the subject of military service. It seems, at least here, to have been allayed. No one doubts the rightness of going if the country calls. No one wants to go. There is a hope that the worst may yet be avoided—the global war. Meanwhile one does what one can to pursue one's appointed way. A similar sobriety characterizes the problem of the students' Americanism. They are today, of course, the children of fairly well-adjusted parents. For few of these parents are alienated from Judaism; many, indeed, are active in their communities; a majority are, I suspect, though I have no statistics, affiliated with temples or synagogues; probably all contribute to the United Jewish Appeal. Thus the children—the overwhelming majority—accept their Judaism, again without much passion but with a fairly calm matter-of-factness. After vacations many of them bring me greetings from their rabbis or from former fellow workers in the Zionist movement. There is a certain feeling of unself-conscious coziness within the Jewish community which is not separated or divided from an almost equally unself-conscious feeling of being at home on the American scene. One group is, of course, intenser—the group that studies under my distinguished colleagues who teach Semitics and Jewish history, philosophy, and culture. And this group is certain to increase as time goes on. It may affect the general temper and attitudes of our student body. I think it will, but it is too early to be certain.

I return once more to the question of the general mildness of this immediate generation of Jewish students. The fact cannot be gainsaid and is matched by similar delineations of contemporary non-Jewish bodies of students. It is, doubtless, due to one of the oscillations of the cultural pendulum which are part of the historic process. After the sordid turbulence for no good cause of the decades described by Mr. Freedman, this particular reaction seems neither unnatural nor even undesirable. I, too, have been irked by a lack of fire, of tense aspiration, of generous passion among my students. But I consented to it from the beginning; I consent to it even more amid the dreadful recollections aroused by Mr. Freedman's article. I am not unhopeful of the future of these young people. I note that almost everywhere the generation immediately preceding theirs, that of the young married people, is founding "young couples' clubs," is building new synagogues and temples when they settle in new communities. Doubtless, the majority of our students will in due time do the same and bring up *their* children Jewishly and be happier and better people both as Americans and as Jews, as Jews and *therefore* as Americans, than were their predecessors of the 20's and 30's. For they are, I would like to repeat in closing, accessible to good.

Oscar Handlin: Today's Jewish student is indeed far different from his counterpart a quarter-century ago. The difference arises primarily out of a general dulling of the sharp sense of separateness that formerly kept Jews apart.

Not that today's young people are any less aware of their Judaism. On the contrary, there is a greater inclination now than there was twenty or thirty years ago to stress group identification. But that identification is taken as a matter of course, as Mr. Freedman indicates, without self-consciousness and without introspection. The growth of interest in religion has edged out the agnosticism and materialism of the 1920's and 1930's; and it is common to find indications of fresh involvement in national or communal causes.

These trends only serve to bring Jewish boys and girls into the kinds of activities that are preoccupying all the rest of the campus. The Hillel Foundation sits next to the Newman Club and the Epworth League; and the students who read Buber are akin in spirit to those who turn to T. S. Eliot. This is all part of the sudden turn toward a quest for tradition, the yearning for some fixed source of authority—whether it exists or not.

It is difficult to say how far this interest penetrates. It certainly seems to have little influence upon the day-to-day academic life. For these students the ends of education are clearly marked out, and they are no different for Jews than for others. For almost half the group, college is the last leisurely interval before moving on into the obligations of family businesses. Among these boys, who have access to cars and no lack of cash, there has developed a social life complete with clubs and weekends and marked with a kind of ruthless hedonism, long the ideal of the American campus. If the Jews differ at all

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from their fellows, it is because their parents, themselves excluded from that life a generation ago, are apt to be more indulgent. The father who himself commuted to City College or who remembers the withheld pleasures of the Midwestern fraternity to which he could not belong, is likely to be infinitely tolerant of the escapades of his son, the Harvard man.

The students for whom college is the first step of a career are necessarily more preoccupied with their studies. They approach their books and the laboratories with a methodical efficiency, out to earn the essential grades that will take them into the graduate schools. They carry obediently the few courses in general education that will furnish them small talk in later life; every man, after all, should have some hobbies. But only a handful will come to know some other meaning of culture.

Gone is the intense interest in ideas as such that distinguished the earlier body of Jewish students. There are few signs of the independence of mind that once led to a completely questioning attitude in which nothing was taken for granted and in which everything was subjected to adventurous speculation. I do not think the total docility of spirit so pervasive on the campus today rises out of fear, out of apprehensions of "witch hunts," or out of forebodings as to what the FBI might some day discover. It springs rather from atrophy of the habit of discussing fundamental issues critically. It is as if ten years of reiterated slogans have stifled the will to ask questions.

These are grievances one could direct against the whole student body. Why single out the Jews?

One might expect the Jews still to be different for two reasons. For one, some of them are, after all, the children of parents who were at one time rebels and consumed with the desire for knowledge. For another, these young people are affiliated with the Jewish community which has always prided itself upon its tradition of learning.

But the parents, alas, have made good. Almost to a man they are at least a little higher up on the economic scale than their parents were. They themselves had rejected their own fathers: not taken up the same callings, not carried on the same way of life. Now in their middle age they fear the very same rejection from their sons. Far from provoking revolt or dissidence, they urge upon the boys the pleasures of conformity. Besides, everyone has read the writings of the analysts, or at least Gesell, and knows that in America children should be adjusted, secure; they wish to spare their offspring the bitterness of being outsiders as they had been.

As for the Jewish community, there is little likelihood of any stimulus to learning there. The tradition of scholarship has always been a myth with which American Jews flattered their self-esteem. It is true that the occasional figure who made his mark in the wider world earned also a certain measure of recognition in the Jewish community—Albert Einstein, just as, but no more than, Benny Leonard. In the brief period in which education held out opportunities for social mobility to the children of immigrants, the lamp of learning shone with the added luster of measurable advantages. But it is hard now to see in the organized life of the community any concern with the values of its culture. The handful of institutions dedicated to those ends attract pitifully meager support and, perhaps, deserve no more than they do attract; their low standards and the poverty of their achievements trouble no one. After all, did not a distinguished rabbi not long ago use "intellectual" as a term of reproach? Why then should the Jewish students be other than they are?

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HOW DEAL WITH FRANCO?

Understanding the Realities of Spain

FRANZ BORKENAU

THE government of the United States seemingly has decided that, to secure the military defense of Europe against Communism, it is essential that Spain play a role in its plans, and that the Spanish government receive economic and military help. There are many who, being admirers of Franco's authoritarian regime, will receive this news with delight. But there are also many others who will be dismayed, remembering that Franco destroyed the Spanish Republic in a bloody civil war in which he received help from Hitler and Mussolini, and that his present rule is, in almost all respects, antithetical to everything democratic.

Personally, I can take no satisfaction in the thought of cooperating with him. Yet I am willing to concede that Generals Eisenhower, Marshall, and Bradley are not stupid; some of the reasons why they are eager to integrate Spain into plans for defending Europe are clear to anyone who takes the trouble to study a map. Naturally, I am aware that there are many people, especially liberals, of a different opinion. I think I know how they feel, and I respect their motives. But I must say the liberal protests against friendly American gestures toward Franco have shown a mindlessness and plain ignorance that is astonishing. In order to speak seriously about Spanish politics, it is important to know what you are talking about. One's case is never made any stronger by the incessant repetition of mistaken and uninformed arguments.

Cooperation with Franco is distasteful—but this has nothing to do with his alleged role as a "fascist dictator" of a "totalitarian state." True, these are the widely current liberal catchwords, but in dealing with the tragic country that is Spain, we should not be content with catchwords. Spanish history and contemporary Spanish life are quite special, with many unique features—and indeed follow a course unlike that of any other European country; loosely applying the familiar European terms to them can prove most misleading. Is it really beside the point that, from the end of the 16th century onwards, ruler after ruler, regime after regime, have attempted either to transform or to stabilize Spanish political and economic life, and that all of them have been failures? Is it a matter of chance that Spain has remained by far the poorest country of Western Europe and that it has lived always under some kind of despotism—and, since the beginning of the 19th century, always, with the exception of two turbulent and ineffectual interludes, under some kind of military despotism?

To talk glibly about a "progressive" policy for Spain is to evade the facts. These are

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IN AN article in our last issue ("Franco: Proud Ruler of a Hungry People"), Peter Schmid reported on the critical situation in which Spain today finds itself—a land saddled with a corrupt despotism and literally on the verge of starvation. It is this country that we propose to make our ally in the struggle between East and West, to the dismay of the major portion of American liberal opinion. Yet, FRANZ BORKENAU asks here, does that opinion correctly assess the political realities of Spanish life? Mr. Borkenau analyzes the present state of unhappy Spain in the context of its history and social development. Particularly, he considers the questions: Is Franco a fascist? Is his regime totalitarian? What is the potential of democratic reform or reconstruction there? How dependable an ally of the West would Franco make? Mr. Borkenau is the author of *The Spanish Cockpit,* one of the very best books to have been published on the Spanish Civil War. He has also written an authoritative history of the Communist International. His last article in COMMENTARY was "Will Technology Destroy Civilization?" in the January 1951 issue.

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complex and do not fall obediently into place when touched by the wand of the "progressive" clichés. That Franco is no democrat, everyone knows. But that does not automatically answer all questions about the nature of his regime and the political possibilities open to Spanish society. And it is these questions that have to be answered before one can sensibly endorse or criticize any particular policy with regard to Spain.

SPAIN is essentially an agricultural country, but her climate is exceedingly arid, in fact the driest in Europe. Where the local conditions are favorable, as in Saragossa, Valencia, and Granada, an industrious population has created a flowering garden, bounteous and beautiful. But in the greater part of Spain it is nature, primarily, that makes for poverty, and the first remedy is not redistribution of the land but irrigation. That, however, would be so immense an undertaking, and so slow in bringing results, as to exceed the capacity of private capital or, indeed, of any exclusively Spanish effort. Large international loans are the only means to a solution, and therefore the question of Spanish irrigation comes under the heading of a Point Four program.

In the meantime, it might be said that redistribution of the land would still do something to relieve the misery of the Spanish peasant. This is simply not true. Agrarian reform can have effect only after, not before, a vast irrigation program. When a map of the average land distribution in Spain is superimposed upon a map of the average rainfall, it will be seen that the various systems of land tenure—small parcels in Galicia, freehold in the Pyrenees, tenant farming in Catalonia, a variety of tenure systems in Valencia, fairly large estates in Castile, latifundia in Andalusia—correspond almost exactly with differences of rainfall. This astonishing coincidence is simply due to the fact that it is the extensive, rather than intensive, kind of soil exploitation which must inevitably go together with dry-farming under conditions of scarcity of capital. Arid regions cannot provide even a modest living for the laboring farmer. Under present conditions there is scope for agrarian reform in Catalonia (where leases could be improved) and in Galicia (where small holdings should be replaced by larger ones), but very little elsewhere.

The impossibility of any simple and easy scheme of land reform was brought vividly to my attention when, during the first phase of the Spanish Civil War, I saw the Andalusian township of Andujar, in Republican territory. That town, with its twenty thousand inhabitants, had been the scene of frightful bloodshed. First, the Guardia (the civil police) had massacred a large number of "Reds." Then the "Reds" had besieged the village, starved the Guardia and their friends into capitulation, and then killed them to the last man plus all the estate managers (the owners were absentees), lawyers, and any other upper-class persons that could be found. It was an event typical of that region and that phase of the Civil War. Yet when I asked what had happened to the land, everybody seemed amazed at the question, because nobody had thought of doing anything about it. Actually, the six latifundia of the township were still run separately by the same workers and foremen, for the same wages, and with the same grumbling about pennies; the only innovation was that, instead of the dead managers, union secretaries were now the paymasters.

What else could have been done? I believe that if land had been offered to the *brazeros* —as the agricultural laborers are called—they would have refused it. How could they have carried on, without water, without buildings, without agricultural implements, without draft animals, and, last but not least, without the slightest experience in the management of a farm? In other parts of Spain, with different systems of land tenure, the massacres were roughly on the same scale, though there were many variations. But the reluctance of the local peasantry to take full control of the ownerless estates was everywhere the same; and in the regions of tenant farming, where, after the elimination of the owners, rents disappeared automatically, they

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were simply replaced by identical government taxes and requisitions.

THE story of Andujar, which stands for hundreds of almost identical cases, can teach us much about the basic reasons for the defeat of the Spanish left. The left, when it came to fulfilling its promises of a better future, had no practical program and could not have had one. It would of course have been possible to collectivize agriculture, a measure strongly advocated by the Anarchists and opposed by the Communists during the Civil War, but state ownership does not make arid land fertile. Actually, there is no country where collectivization would be as easy as in Spain, and in the larger part of the country it could be effected by the stroke of a pen. For there is no country where absentee landlordism is so widespread, and, in the South and Southwest at least, collectivization would simply mean that the present managers would be ordered to deposit the profits of their estates with the civil treasury instead of to the accounts of private individuals. The resulting wealth accruing to the state would be, in national terms, insignificant; and Spanish methods of administration being what they are, most of it would stick to the fingers of officialdom. No wonder, therefore, that of all aspects of the Anarchist program, land collectivization evoked the least response.

However, there were villages in Andalusia like Castro del Rio, an old Anarchist stronghold, that collectivized the land enthusiastically. Those villages, invariably, abolished money at the same time and put a death penalty on its use. In Castro I was physically threatened because I had asked for a cup of coffee—coffee being a sinful bourgeois luxury and water the only natural, and therefore permissible, drink for people not corrupted by religion, submission to the state, and the bourgeois spirit in general. The more militant of the Andalusian Anarchists took these ideals very seriously, and preposterous though they were as social remedies, they were not as ridiculous as might seem in well-watered countries. Extreme asceticism very well suits a society constantly threatened with starvation by an arid climate.

Nor are such attitudes specifically Anarchist in Spain. They are shared by the traditional enemies of the Anarchists, the Carlists—who in their turn have about as little in common with European conservatives as Spanish Anarchists have with European socialists. The essence of Carlism is the total rejection of all that has happened since the 16th century; like the more fervent Anarchists, the Carlists concentrate their hatred on anything that has to do with steam power and the nefarious luxuries it helps to produce; for decades, railways were their chief bugbear. And again it would be a mistake to look for such attitudes only among extremists of the right or left. Their basic assumptions are shared by even the more moderate parties.

Thus, the town of Ciudad Real, in the early phase of the Civil War, was completely in the hands of the Socialists and they had to a large extent collectivized the estates of the surrounding province. Socialist students from the Reforma Agraria office took me out to visit one of these newborn "collectives," which I found to be a poor enough show by European standards. But the students took a different view, and one of them broke out into a panegyric of the Castilian peasant, who could live on next to nothing and demanded little from life. This is a common Spanish boast, but it is also no more than the truth, and this capacity to endure under deprivation is the virtue Spaniards prize most. Gerald Brenan in his *Spanish Labyrinth* pertinently quotes Don Quixote's paean to the Golden Age, when there were no luxuries: people then were so perfect that they lived on acorns.

Whatever the formulas borrowed from the West by the leaders of political parties whose roots—except in Catalonia and the Basque country—are weak in any case, the Spanish people do not think primarily in terms of material improvements. A really thoroughgoing victory of the native Spanish left would probably have involved an attempt to introduce a regime of primitive asceticism

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similar to that of the Anabaptists in 16th-century Münster, not to that of Stalin with his Five Year Plans.

THEORETICALLY, industrialization offers a way out of this vicious circle of poverty and utopian fanaticism. But the problems are enormous. Industrialization, in an agricultural country like Spain, is largely a problem of markets—markets in a country whose people live on a subsistence level! Quite characteristically, the savings of the Basque and Catalan bourgeoisie, while feeding local industries, have also to a large extent helped to industrialize Argentina; there could really be no better index of the absence of economic possibilities than the failure of even the most industrious and profit-minded sections of the nation to invest their capital at home. The only way to create a Spanish market that would encourage industrialization is, once again, irrigation.

Another retarding factor is the unsuitableness of the average Castilian and Andalusian for modern business, a lack of economic instinct that is the counterpart of the ascetic and destructive impulses of the common people. Things being what they are, industrialization would give decisive power to Catalans and Basques, and endanger the present primacy of Castile and Andalusia. Thus the conflict of regional loyalties—which, among the woes of Spain, is second only to the dryness of the soil—is intertwined with the problem of industrialization. As a result, Madrid governments are bound to be hostile to an industrialization that would diminish their own relative powers.

BECAUSE the soil is so poor, the climate so hostile, and industry so immature, there is only a small stratum of rich—who are relatively very rich—and a large mass of very poor people, and an abyss divides them. Among the poor must be reckoned, not only millions of landless *brazeros*, millions of peasants living in semi-starvation on plots far below the margin of profitable exploitation, workers toiling with inadequate machinery and for inadequate wages for an inadequate market, but also the middle classes —the numerous *caballeros* living on the verge of ruin, borrowing carpets from pawnshops when they expect distinguished visitors. The Spanish middle class is not at all of the kind that can carry out a revolution, found a stable and representative government, and take control of a country's destiny.

The relation between their ruling caste and the mass of Spaniards is only occasionally pushed to the foreground of politics. On the other hand, every Spanish regime has to contend with, and nearly every one of them has been defeated by, not a popular uprising, but the immense difficulty of harmonizing the various interests represented in the thin upper crust. Here two basic misconceptions, almost universally accepted, must be corrected: contrary to what is generally believed, the Spanish Church is not a landowner, and the army is not run by the landed aristocracy.

There still remain before my eyes the puzzled faces of the villagers of at least a dozen places in various parts of Spain who did not know how to answer my questions about Church lands and what had been done with them in the Civil War. The fact is that in Spain there is no Church-owned land whatsoever, not an acre of it—the cabbage plots of the village priests excepted. In 1837, during the first Carlist war, the liberal Premier Mendizabal expropriated the Church lands wholesale and sold them for a song, as was done during the French Revolution, with the difference that in France the richer peasants got a share whereas in Spain the land was bought up almost entirely by the urban commercial classes, and a fairly substantial group of non-aristocratic estate-owners was formed. None of this land was restored to the Church during the subsequent era of clerical reaction. By contrast, sections of the Church—some, not all, episcopal sees, and some, but not by any means all, of the religious orders—acquired large amounts of mobile capital in the form of shares and business investments, thereby becoming, after the Catalan bourgeoisie, the biggest "capitalist" element in Spain. A Church closely

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tied to the soil and rooted in feudal property relations would have remained nearer to the mind and heart of the Spanish people. It is the Church's role as banker and investor that has brought her popular hostility, since most Spaniards still hold unconsciously to the medieval view that property in land is right and proper, while investment in business, and especially in finance, is always suspect.

The Spanish army, in contrast to most European armies, has not been an aristocratic body for a long time. Why should an Andalusian or Estremaduran magnate join the army or send his sons into it? He is a king in his own dominions. As for the Spanish hidalgo, the poor Castilian country squire immortalized by Cervantes, he is not a Prussian Junker, and serving the state does not seem particularly honorable to him; he generally prefers to starve independently rather than toil as a cog in a machine. It is the Castilian, Andalusian, and Galician middle class, whose *point d'honneur* is less subtle while its hunger for jobs is stronger, that sends its sons into the army, where there is pay without too much work, and social distinction in the bargain. The army and civil service between them employ a large section of the Spanish bourgeoisie—if that term can be applied to a class which lacks any outlet in business for its energies. A look at the list of Franco's generals should be enough to convince the most skeptical that the Spanish high command is not an aristocratic body. The army's lower ranks, naturally, are even more modest in social origin.

The high Church dignitaries, the army generals, and the Andalusian magnates together form the triune galaxy of the Spanish body politic. Far beneath them, the hidalgos, the civil service, and the business classes of the North constitute forces to be reckoned with in about the same way as the French government reckoned with similar groups in Louis XIV's age. The main political game has been played, since the end of the 18th century, between Church and army, with the magnates of the South as arbiters. Nevertheless, the chessboard of Spanish politics has in actuality been much more interesting and the game more complicated than these basic facts would suggest. During the 18th century the Church lost her capacity to rule by mere prestige, and ever since has had to find generals to support her cause; this divided the army into liberals and conservatives. This split in the military, in turn, split the landowners into contending factions. The Church alone remained more or less united in action.

It is hardly necessary to stress the importance of this background for an understanding of any Spanish regime, including Franco's. But at this point it may be opportune to shift our analysis from Spain's domestic to her international relations. Since Franco is so often called a "fascist," it would be worth studying the relation of his regime to other regimes that have been called fascist. Here a major circumstance can provide guidance: Franco's attitude toward the democracies and Axis powers in 1940.

Throughout the Civil War, Franco had proclaimed a more or less fascist ideology: this was the very cheap price he paid for Italian and German support. Nor did he abate in his praise of the totalitarian, or his vilification of the democratic, system when the Civil War was over. But then, after the collapse of France, came the test. Against all expectations, Franco, unlike Mussolini, did not lift a finger in support of the powers that had helped him win his war. Had he thrown his lot in with Hitler's, the Nazis would probably have reached Dakar, there could never have been a North African landing by the Allies, and the Axis would have established a permanent threat to the southern half of the Western hemisphere. Needless to say, Franco was moved not by admiration of the democratic way of life but by a shrewd estimate of the inherent strength and moral and material reserves of the Allied powers. It was probably this same estimate that caused him to give Spanish passage, even though with bureaucratic red tape and other molestation, to thousands of refugees from Nazi terror, including a number of avowed Communists and a large number of Jews.

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Shrewd opportunism? Exactly. This indifference toward the central aims of the fascist world movement, this cynicism as to its most sacred ideological tenets, reflects another essential feature of the Franco regime: its nationalist isolationism. This isolationism did not appear only in 1940. It is the red thread running through all of Franco's policies from the end of the Civil War down to the present day. Franco certainly was not averse to picking a few plums for himself if it could be done without much risk. He would have liked to get Tangier, but maneuvered so cautiously that, failing to get it, he yet escaped any unpleasant consequences of the attempt. He has been looking round for international backing and therefore cultivates his connection with the Vatican on the one hand, with Latin America on the other (and, of course, with Portugal's Salazar). But to involve Spain in a conflict beyond its borders—never! Even today, when support from the West is a question of life and death, he has made it clear that he will not consent to the use of Spanish troops outside Spain (where, incidentally, they would not be worth much). In this attitude, if in no other, Franco is the spokesman of the Spanish people and continues a tradition now one hundred and fifty years old. Spain is essentially, deeply, incontrovertibly isolationist. Contemporary Spain, under whatever regime, does not wish to be dragged into the main current of Western growth, expansion, and aggression. This attitude is expressed in Spanish anarchism no less than in Carlism and Falangism.

Aside from its paramount practical motive, Franco's isolationism also provides a clue to the understanding of his regime as a whole. Keeping inside one's own house, nonparticipation in the affairs of the world at large, refusing to be dragged into the whirlpool of modern progress—in other words, trying to establish an island cut off from both the opportunities and dangers of modern industrial society. That is the real Franco program. And it is the natural program of a supreme Catholic Church that can only lose by opening the floodgates of modernism. Unfortunately, it also happens to be a program stemming quite naturally from the tremendous, almost insurmountable difficulties that Spain must overcome in order to modernize herself. In a sense, the Franco regime, like many Spanish regimes preceding it, makes a virtue of the inevitable (inevitable, that is, without American economic help on a scale not practicable at the present moment).

We have every right, and every reason, to dislike an ideology proclaiming backwardness as an ideal, and even more reason to detest those who praise a narrow, corrupt police regime as if it were the world's eighth wonder. Yet an abyss separates Franco from Hitler or Stalin, and everything depends upon understanding this. For it is the essence of all genuinely totalitarian regimes in our day to strive to be ultra-modern, and sacrifice everything for it. Not only are they driven forward by the ambition to "reach and overreach" American industrial achievement, they also try, for their own security, to build a state machine infinitely more efficient than any other; at the same time their aggressive urges are insatiable and lead inevitably to military ventures outside their own borders.

The difference between Franco on the one hand, and the Nazis and other genuine fascists on the other, reveals itself everywhere, in the structure of their respective regimes, the mechanism of their rule, their social support. Lenin, Mussolini, and Hitler rose as party bosses and mass leaders, Stalin at least as a party boss. Franco, like Kemal, rose as an army leader, has never built a party machine, and has never had the slightest mass appeal. (Tito, too, rose as an army leader rather than as a party organizer, and this greatly affects the structure of his regime.) The Spanish Falange, founded by the younger Primo de Rivera, was never a serious force. Franco, as soon as he was in the saddle, virtually destroyed it. He demoted and arrested dead Primo's successor, Hedilla, and forced the remnants of his organization into a merger with their bitterest enemies, the medievalist Carlists. After that, the Falange was

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kept going, partly as a hoax to mislead Mussolini, partly as a gang allowed to run the black market on condition of being politically docile.

Actually all totalitarian movements have risen *against* the traditional upper classes of their respective countries. This is an essential, perhaps even the most essential aspect of totalitarianism as such. The upper classes are the upper classes by virtue of being independent forces able to exert influence upon society and government. Totalitarianism, by contrast, is incompatible with the existence of independent pressure groups. In Germany, the traditional upper classes were the only social force that opposed Hitler, not only individually but, to some extent, as a caste; the conspiracy of July 1944, which was the only serious attempt to overthrow the Nazi regime, developed in their midst. In Italy, where the leveling force of the Fascist mob movement was infinitely weaker than in Germany, the upper classes actually succeeded in getting rid of Mussolini—his fall was entirely due to an upper-class conspiracy, with the monarchy and army at its core —and restoring their own rule.

Next to Salazar, the Franco regime, supported by Church, landed aristocracy, and army, is the purest expression, in all Europe, of reactionary—that is, largely pre-capitalist —forces of the kind that attempted to overthrow Hitler and succeeded in overthrowing Mussolini. The Spanish bourgeois and petty bourgeois classes are too small and too weak either to effect a republican revolution or to form a base for a genuine fascist movement. This is another reason why Franco, in 1940 and later, could not and did not support the Axis. Why should dukes and Catholic archbishops have prayed for Hitler's victory and thereby for their own political and social doom?

THE Franco regime, with its distinctly medieval trends, has all the characteristic faults of Spain: an extreme backwardness, resulting in extreme inefficiency, accompanied by boundless corruption. It will be said that such a regime cannot inspire much confidence as a partner in international politics. That, however, depends on what one wants it as a partner for.

One has only to read the history of Wellington's relations with the Spanish generals to realize that not much can ever be expected from any Spanish force in regular warfare. But it is quite beside the point to evoke, in this context, the specter of a new Chiang Kai-shek debacle. Whether the Spaniards fight or refuse to fight will not be determined by their political regime—the state in Spain has been for centuries an incubus not really belonging to the body of the nation, and the Spaniards, when they fight, do so as patriots but never as citizens. And if they do fight, it will be mainly locally and not much by way of large-scale action.

But whatever the contribution or lack of contribution by the Spanish people, this country of roughly twenty million inhabitants is one of the most easily defensible positions in Europe—granted adequate air and naval support—and lends itself preeminently to the action of small armies such as Wellington provided in the Napoleonic era and the Western powers could provide in a future war. Spain's strategic importance is paramount, since if she is in enemy hands the Mediterranean cannot be held, and troops deeper in Europe would have no rear to retreat to and no base to advance from. The problem is not, therefore, to make the Spaniards fight as a regular army—which they have not done successfully since their defeat at Rocroy in 1643—but to secure the peninsula as an operational base.

And for this, one and only one thing is necessary: not to create conditions that might open the gates to the Communists. But this is exactly what those are doing who insist grandiloquently on the imminent "overthrow" of Franco and the establishment of "democracy." What they forget is that the economic impossibility of effective large-scale social reform and the historic wide gap between the upper and lower classes have always made for harsh governments and frequent revolutions solving nothing. Mostly, the periods of relatively mild government were those when

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pressure on the regime was lowest, as during the restoration after 1874. It is noteworthy how far Franco, after all the horror of the early days of his rule, has drifted away from the methods of terrorism. The political history of Spain can be described as an undulation from harsh authoritarianism toward a relative liberalism, from there to blind revolutionary convulsions, and back to the original regime of the hard hand. It is the same kind of cycle with which Americans should be familiar from South American politics. There is no "middle way" without large-scale economic assistance from outside the country—and it is just such assistance that so many American liberals oppose!

For a while it looked as if the Spanish Republic, before 1936, might break the cycle, but the attempt failed; and there is good reason for believing it would have failed even without Axis intervention—after all, it was the International Brigade alone that saved Madrid on November 7, 1936, when the military revolt was still an internal affair. Moreover, there is no doubt in my own mind that, had the revolt been quelled, the ensuing trend would have been toward Anarchist rule, or a civil war between Communists and Anarchists, with the results, in any case, being chaos, violence—and some form of eventual military dictatorship.

A good way to be introduced to the realities of Spanish politics is to look at the career of Francisco Franco himself. Franco comes from a middle-class family, one of the few modern families of Spain. It is amazing that so unconventional a young man, among the unteachable brassheads of the Spanish army, should have succeeded in becoming its youngest general. Within a few years of the final defeat of Abd-el-Krim, he succeeded in doing what none had achieved before: making reliable soldiers out of the rebellious Moors of the Riff. He and his brother Ramon, the latter an internationally famous aviator (also something quite odd in the Spanish army), developed anarcho-syndicalist leanings. During the tragically abortive republican rising of 1930 Ramon attempted to bomb the royal palace in Madrid single-handed. Both brothers, on the advent of the Republic, offered their services enthusiastically but were soon alienated, partly by the chaos and ineffectualness of the new regime, but at least as much by the success of the new war minister, Azana, in reducing the army. In consequence, the Francos changed their political position.

In 1934 things had reached the point where Gil Robles, the ultra-Catholic war minister of a right-wing government, could call on the unconventional general to suppress the Socialist rising in the Asturias and clean up the mess General Lopez Ochoa had made there. Franco, defying all the traditions of the Spanish infantry, refused to go directly to the North and direct his troops from a hill with the help of binoculars; instead he moved to the telephone room of the Madrid war office, whence he directed the Asturian campaign by means of such unchivalrous modern gadgets as wires and maps. (He showed, incidentally, an equally ungentlemanly familiarity with the building's basement, directing an aide to the place where the maps could be found.)

The defeat of the Asturian rising completed Franco's break with the left and his reconciliation with the old order. Doubtless through Church influence, as is usual in Spain in such cases, a marriage was arranged for him with a Bahamonde girl, offspring of one of the most devoutly Catholic aristocratic families of Galicia. After that General Franco, not at all as a political leader, but as one among several military caudillos—Mola and Sanjurjo took precedence over him, but were both killed very early in the Civil War—became a sword of the reaction, stabilizing his leadership by a blow against the Falange, in 1937. Since then he has been nothing but the head of a *combinazione* of conservatives of various shades, a typically Spanish military dictator.

A very bad administrator, a man without even a claim to being a mass politician, he is yet a very shrewd leader of a heterogenous team of collaborators and, in the international field, a cunning diplomat. He is a man whose

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political function has completely blotted out his original personality, a man who does the contrary of what he once believed in, a man born perhaps to be a fascist or even a Communist general, but transformed by the pressure of social circumstances into the very contrary—a skillful agent of the Church he despises, of the aristocracy he envies, and of army generals who, apparently, find him a little uncanny to this very day.

THE factors securing Franco's regime became very obvious once more, during the recent crisis, when the Socialists attempted to displace him by a restoration of the monarchy—an attempt supported by most of the landed aristocracy, an important section of the Church, some of the generals, and, last but not least, by British and partly by French diplomacy. Franco could of course be ousted at any time by direct military action of the Western powers, but a new regime based upon foreign bayonets could command no support whatsoever and would simply lead to another civil war. The idea was therefore passionately rejected by all Spanish opposition groups. But the alternative of overthrowing Franco from within, by splitting his supporters with the help of moral pressure from abroad, proved equally impracticable.

Aristocracy and Church would on the whole have preferred a monarchy because of their belief in the stabilizing power of monarchical legitimacy. But this principle, borrowed from Metternich and Talleyrand, proved ineffectual in the face of Franco's determination to hold on, and that of a sufficiently substantial part of the army to defend him. When it became apparent that armed rebellion and another civil war would be necessary to oust Franco, the *combinazione* around Prince Don Juan revealed itself as what it was bound to be from the beginning: an attempt merely to install another dictatorship instead of the existing one, and which could not even afford to contemplate anything more radical than a palace *coup*. For in another civil war the ruling caste would have been split and the gates thrown open to a new upheaval and ultimate Communist penetration of Spain. Faced with such a prospect, the conservative supporters of Don Juan took fright and returned to the Franco fold, while Indalecio Prieto, the Socialist leader, frankly recognizing that his whole policy had been based upon mistaken assumptions, went off to Cuba in despair.

It would seem that in present-day Spain every relatively stable regime, even if it calls itself republican, is constrained to be in effect a military dictatorship. Is there, then, nothing to be done? The answer is—not much, but what can be done will have to be done, for the while at least, through the Franco regime. To the extent that American economic aid soothes the more critical social tensions, to that extent is the regime likely to become less harsh and brutal—and to that extent, too, is the average Spaniard less likely to die of malnutrition. Moreover, to the extent that American aid helps Spain solve the basic problem of irrigation, to that same extent will the possibilities for parliamentary democracy become more real.

BECAUSE Franco is now our ally is no reason for liking him the more, or for ascribing to him—as we did to Stalin during the war, and as many now do to Tito—non-existent virtues. Such self-delusion can only lead to political confusion. Nor should one expect American "influence" to work wonders. It is time, however, that Western liberals ceased their utterly irresponsible talk about a "progressive revolution" in Spain, which means, in plain English, another civil war. Rather than have a repetition of the Civil War, the Spaniards will choose Franco without hesitation. (If anyone doubts this, I recommend that he read Gerald Brenan's recent fine book, *The Face of Spain*.) And if Franco is replaced at all, in the present circumstances, it will be by a royalist junta—which would not really make much of a difference for the ordinary Spaniard—or by a Communist regime, which would be a disaster for Spain and the West alike.

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RETURN TO DACHAU

"Not All the Perfumes of Arabia. . . ."

ALFRED WERNER

ONE bright spring day of 1939 two odd-looking men walked down from the Munich Central Station toward one of the restaurants on the other side of the square. With their battered hats, unshaven faces, dirty winter coats, and dusty shoes, they looked like tramps. As they removed their hats and sat down for a quick meal, their short-clipped hair made them easily recognizable as prisoners—concentration camp prisoners, to be precise.

One of these men was myself—former *Schutzhaftjude Nr. 27660,* picked up by a Nazi agent in a Vienna street in November 1938 during the pogroms that followed Grynszpan's assassination of Ernst vom Rath in Paris. Actually, we were special prisoners, neither free nor unfree: we belonged to a group of Viennese Jews who had just been released from nearby Dachau but were under strict orders to wait in the station for the next train to Vienna. Our leaving the station could have meant reinternment.

It was this little Munich episode that I remembered when, in the summer of 1951, I returned for the first time to the erstwhile *Haupstadt der Bewegung,* that is, the "capital" of the Nazi movement. Long an American citizen, I was on a European holiday, and really had no reason for stopping at Munich. It is no fun to see ruins.

All the same, I had an itch to see Dachau again. Dachau had been the turning point of my life. When I entered it I was a young writer with ideals that not even the effects of the *Anschluss* had been able to kill. I had written poetry up until the day I was handcuffed and shoved into a makeshift Gestapo jail in Vienna. When I left Dachau I wasn't much wiser, but I felt older—almost old. I felt like a man who had successfully undergone a dangerous operation, and who now grasped at the new life leased out to him, and held fast to it with all his strength. Dachau was the "dark forest" of my Inferno, where I found myself midway in the journey of life. Once I had left it, everything seemed beautiful and desirable by comparison—except perhaps death. In America I would write into my *curriculum vitae,* with all sincerity, that I was a graduate of the Dachau concentration camp.

YET I never really left it behind. For twelve years "Dachau" had been a trauma, a wound that I feared might never heal. Whenever I saw the word "Dachau" in print, or heard it uttered, my entire body would recoil. It mattered little that in the spring of 1945 the headlines reported "Infamous Dachau Falls; 32,000 Freed"; as a phenomenon of my soul, Dachau continued to exist.

When a child, I had lost my mother in an accident; she was burned to death while lighting one of the old-fashioned Viennese stoves. Until I was about twelve the very sight of a flame would make me shriek—even the tiny flash when my father lit his cigarette. And although there were no gas chambers in Dachau in 1939, I could not think of the place at all except in images of roaring fire and red ashes. I had to return to see with my own eyes that the fire no longer

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ALFRED WERNER was born in Vienna in 1911, and was well launched on a literary career before the *Anschluss* with Germany landed him in the Dachau concentration camp. Immediately after his release, he emigrated to this country. He has been a frequent contributor to COMMENTARY, the *New York Times Book Review,* and many other magazines. His most recent article in these pages was on the late Ernst Wiechert, the German novelist, in our August 1951 issue.

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burned in the crematoria furnaces, and the chimneys no longer smoked. I was told that thousands of ex-Dachauers now come back as I did—ostensibly to see that the memorial is kept in order, but really, I suspect, to make sure that the fire is out.

THE 20,000 people of the town of Dachau, I discovered, are of two minds as to what ought to be done with the camp. On the one hand, they would like to see the buildings razed—at least the crematoria, which act as a constant reminder to them of their own ambiguous attitude toward the horrors that went on in their neighborhood. But the camp has been good business for the town. It has been good business for twenty years and it is good business now. First, there were the big shots of the SS who had villas around it, and whose families did a lot of shopping in the town. Now ex-prisoners—Frenchmen, Belgians, Dutchmen, and Jews ("Those Jews have again amassed a fortune," I overheard it said in a Munich café)—provide the local railroad, the bus company, the newsstands, and the restaurants with many customers.

One might think that the good citizens of Dachau would at least demand of the city council that the place change its name, as criminals often do after release from jail. But the Dachauers still cling to a name that smells of blood throughout the world. And an official brochure invites people to spend their summers in its beautiful surroundings (*"Dachau erwartet dich!"*); it relates Dachau's history from the time of the Romans up to 1934, when with great pomp (and large swastikas) the village was elevated to the status of a city. At that time the concentration camp, built in a peat bog by five thousand slave workers, was already a year old. The brochure makes no mention of any camp, but, instead, hospitably invites you to drink the local Dachauer beer, to eat the original Dachauer pumpernickel, to dance at the Café Restaurant Ludwig Thoma (Thoma was a Bavarian writer who loved the *gemütlich* Dachau landscape, as did two noted 19th-century painters, Spitzweg and Leibl).

I BOARDED the bus that leaves Stiglmeierplatz in Munich at regular intervals. The people inside, farmers and middle-class men and women, showed as much interest in my American suit and tie as in my features. A bearded, elderly man who looked like Crown Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria advised me to see an exhibition of paintings—Dachau School—at the Dachau castle. "No, I'm not interested in art just now," I explained politely. "I don't even expect to attend the *Volksfest* with all the fireworks and music. I came here to see the crematoria."

The old man was not surprised at my answer. In fact, he seemed to have a stock of ready-made phrases for such an occasion; they rolled smoothly and glibly. How wonderful it was that the Fatherland was rid of Hitler at last. But would he have come to power without the aid of the Western democracies? As for the camp, it was a *Schandfleck* for Germany, but the people of Dachau —like himself—were quite innocent, and it was unfair to blame them for what had gone on in the camp. Anyway, he had heard about the unpleasantness only in 1945. He had never seen any prisoners himself, though of course he and his family had often given food to the slave workers toiling in the fields.

I nodded politely, but did not fail to observe the landscape. On many houses, some of which were badly damaged, arrows pointing to air-raid shelters could still be seen, half washed away by the rain. A movie theater where Ingrid Bergman was featured in *Joan of Arc;* whitewashed red-roofed farm houses with neat flower gardens; American Army Ordnance posts; inns with quaint names; small groups of pine trees. Finally the railroad station, on the outskirts of Dachau town. As I said goodbye to the old gentleman he was still trying to convince me of his and his fellow townsmen's innocence.

A taxi driver approached me, one of a dozen waiting at the station. *"Der Herr wünscht das Krematorium?"* ("Does the gentleman want the crematorium?") I could not help laughing. No, I wasn't quite ready for the crematorium as yet, but I wanted to see whatever could be seen of the camp and

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its surroundings. The driver, in his broad, musical Bavarian dialect, explained to me that he was well trained for that mission, having shown the camp to numerous visitors, including some *"israelitische Herren."* After a short while we stopped at an American Army post. A sergeant rushed out, quickly examined my passport, and told us to proceed farther on the *Strasse der KZ Opfer,* or "Road of the Concentration Camp Victims."

The large, pink stucco houses scattered over a wide area were familiar to me: until 1945 they had been dwellings of the SS officers, the *Sturmbannführer* and *Standartenführer* who had lived riotously at the expense of the German nation. Once it was a model community, with a beautiful playground for children, a fine swimming pool, and lovely gardens; the soil had never lacked for fertilizer—there was always enough bone dust from the crematoria. There had also been, side by side with the idyllic family life, sybaritic orgies, sex, drugs, and champagne. Today, alas, the glory is gone, and the American military is using these buildings as offices.

WE DROVE to what looked like a nice fast-flowing brook: it was the moat that for twelve years separated the prisoners from the rest of the world. I recognized the bridge leading over it and the big entrance building behind it. Once there had been an iron door bearing the paternal exhortation *"Arbeit macht frei,"* the letters forming a piece of superb craftsmanship in wrought iron. Since the Nazis were very thorough in keeping their records, we know that between March 1933 and April 1945 exactly 221,930 people were "processed" through this very door; about 7,000 more arrived shortly before the debacle, when there was no longer time to attend to the records. People from nearly all parts of Europe had entered this gate, some to be released after a while, others to fertilize the gardens of the Elite Guard families. When American soldiers liberated the camp on April 29, 1945, there were 31,432 inmates still there, many of them more dead than alive. They belonged to forty-two different national groups, mainly Poles, Russians, Frenchmen, Slovenes, Jews, Italians, Czechs, and Germans—their relative numbers going in that order. There were also people from Arabia, Persia, Malta, and Armenia.

I looked again at what had been my *Lebensraum* for a dreary half-year: a compound of sixty-odd wooden huts, plus a number of stone buildings that had served as offices, kitchen, bath, and for the storage of clothes and supplies. Whether the most dreaded institution of the pre-war camp, the Bunker—dark prison within a prison—was still in existence, I could not ascertain. Having been turned over to DP's a couple of years ago, the camp now looks like a shanty town, a German version of a Hooverville. The machine-gun towers were razed, but the barbed-wire fence around the camp was still standing.

The inmates now were displaced persons from Eastern Europe who refused to return to their former homes. None of them was a Jew. I had seen camps like this one before, with the same community kitchen, laundry, sewing room, makeshift school and makeshift hospital, with the same atmosphere of boredom, hopelessness, the same tendency to petty crime. "They have been waiting long for a chance to emigrate," the cab driver remarked drily. "Long, but not long enough. Perhaps they'll be there next year, too, or even two years from now."

The little moat, bluish and clear, will be there, too, and nobody will know what anguish it once caused so many human beings. I remember the week before the Christmas of 1938, when the snow was very heavy. A tall, beautifully lit tree was placed in the center of the camp, but it did not make us happy. For it was our task to clear away snow and ice, and all work had to be done at double-quick, with not a moment's pause, under the eyes of storm troopers who kicked those who slipped or collapsed from the strain. I was one of the thousands of antlike human animals who hurriedly loaded their wheelbarrows with snow and dumped it into the river. One elderly man slipped and his loaded wheelbarrow slid into the water. A Nazi guard kicked him in after it. Days later, the body was removed from the water.

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WHAT I had seen so far was "old stuff." New to me, however, was what I saw when we turned to the right, into what looked like the entrance to a tastefully landscaped American state park. The pretty little house on the right surrounded by evergreens might have been a gardener's cottage, but the driver dismissed it. "Oh, that was only the *kleine Krematorium.*" Wait and see the real thing!

The "real thing" was built only after the start of the war. There had been no need for crematoria so long as Hitler had hoped to conquer the world by intimidation alone. Only after 1940 did the furnaces begin their work at Auschwitz, Dachau, Buchenwald, and elsewhere. In front of the long white-washed one-story brick building that had been the *grosses Krematorium* now stood a small statue portraying the type of hollow-cheeked, emaciated prisoner who "went up in smoke" in the early 40's. It had been unveiled on April 29, 1950, in an impressive ceremony on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the liberation of Dachau. Thousands of people had been present, most of them Dachau survivors.

I let the car wait for me and entered the building where a sign said "Museum." The large room was filled with photographs, a model of the camp, and maps showing the location of the cemeteries, Christian and Jewish. This had once been a waiting room for prisoners marked for death. They were made to believe that they were just going to get a bath, ordered to strip, each given a towel and a bit of soap, and sent through a doorway marked *Brausebad* ("shower"). How could one suspect anything printed in black and white, especially when it came from a *Kulturvolk* like the Germans?

I was met by a guide who looked undernourished and pale, as though he had spent most of his life underground. He hastened to assure me that he had been *persona non grata* to the Third Reich, and that his wife had been arrested by the Nazis. But he had, inevitably, a certain callousness in common with all guides who show visitors through cemeteries, battlefields, and the like. I certainly cannot blame him for the sober, unemotional way he showed and explained the whole death factory, but I could not help feeling something weird in the matter-of-factness with which he pointed out the dummy sprinklers set in the pipeless ceiling; the gratings in the floor, deceptively resembling water drains, through which the gas was sent; and the glass peephole in the control-room wall through which the SS man in charge could study the scene.

I WAS shown the morgue; when the Americans had arrived, the storage room was still piled to the ceiling with corpses. Then came the furnace room—the climax of the tour. Wreaths hung on each furnace and on the walls, put there by visitors in memory of dead comrades. When the guide volunteered to show me how the corpses had been pushed into the ovens, I said, rather harshly, that I had had enough.

All over the building inscriptions had been left by ex-prisoner visitors. Ordinarily, one might have objected to this as the defacing of a public building, but in this case the scribblings on this aesthetically uninteresting edifice added a new dimension of significance to it. The writings were in German-Gothic and Latin script, in Cyrillic and Hebrew letters; they revealed the hands of sophisticated intellectuals and of simple workmen. Geographically, they ranged from Amsterdam to Belgrade, from Milan to Oslo. Beneath the name and the prisoner's number (e.g., *Häftling Nr.* 23801) were words of contempt and fury—*"Das waren keine Menschen sondern Bestien"*—or verses from the Bible: *"Je suis la Résurrection et la Vie."*

It had begun to rain heavily, and, perhaps a bit too brusquely, I declined my guide's routine offer to show me the trenches on the pistol range in which prisoners had been forced to stand as living targets. Nor did I care to see the fir tree that had served as a gallows—"One of the lower branches still shows the deep mark left by the hangman's rope." I was tired and felt sick, and wanted to shake the cursed soil of Germany from my shoes.

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THE AMERICAN WOMAN AS SNOW-QUEEN

Our Self-Contemptuous Acceptance of Europe's Myth

ELIZABETH HARDWICK

THE muddy waves of American self-reproach beat upon the European shores again. Nothing seems to have happened in thirty years. The postwar generation of young Americans is back in Europe, but it has skipped the last war and everything goes on reassuringly as before, the needle is stuck in a conversation from *The Sun Also Rises*. Comfortable with government funds or savings, there is nevertheless often a shy and wistful glance beneath the crew-cut—these new expatriates seek after all a place in time, the consolations of history. Conservative, like a reluctant old Victorian gentleman they cling to their past, the *bad* old times, an original stew of the 1920's and 30's. Sighing, they find themselves and their ideas among the dear, remembered deprivations of their parents' lives: starving, disenfranchised workers, the outlawed artist, apple-sellers on the street, fascism just around the corner, the shamefully rich owners of production insisting upon a new war. It is touching—so history is preserved in character.

But there is too much of it and in the historical attitude there are always footnote disagreements. It is easier to take simply one unchallenged notion—our own and the consequent European horror of the American girl, who is also away from home by the thousands, dog-paddling in the European waters, gasping and calling out helplessly, "Me, I'm different. Don't think I'm like the others, please!"

In a French café an alarmed and somewhat shabby French girl accompanies an American "painter" in blue-jean battledress. "She looks after him. She's not spoiled like American women." The other Americans yearningly approve his luck. A Frenchman with a stunning companion arouses envy. No one knows quite what they may be talking about—the depths of this dialogue are not to be plumbed with hotel and restaurant French—but no matter. Who could fail to note that shot of stimulating benzedrine that *must* be in the French woman's conversation, her "active" listening, her artistic prodding here and there, her smile of comprehension and fascination? "What animation!" the American boys say, their eyes popping. And then there is the more earth-bound type of young American—oh, the Italian girl's exquisite, rumpled, and plump submission to fate!

"But your women are so cold!" the French say and we nod bleakly. The Italians shudder. "I'm afraid of them, they want so many things all the time. Our girls are not like that." Only the Turks, with their scarecrows in colored rags doing all the work in the fields, seem to feel a disgust with the native product equal to ours; and there it is not so much a comparison with foreign brands that arouses their scorn as the comparison with their male selves snoozing in the cafés.

A FEW years ago, when Mary McCarthy, entertaining a French visitor to America, heard her country criticized in the condescending way traditional with Europeans, she reacted to such effect that the result was a brilliant essay, "America the Beautiful," printed in COMMENTARY, September 1947, and since reprinted in England and elsewhere. Here another American woman, ELIZABETH HARDWICK, critic and novelist, reacts to another part of Europe's dark intellectual forest on the subject of America—what they think about our women. Miss Hardwick was born and brought up in Lexington, Kentucky. Her novel *The Ghostly Lover* appeared in 1946, and she has published short stories and criticism in various literary magazines. She is married to Robert Lowell, the poet, and is at present living in Amsterdam, Holland.

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No one could cast doubt on the obvious and tremendous charms of European women, but the licentious familiarity with the subject of American women that is commonly undertaken, the repetitive exchanges, fill one with gloom, this eternal dining on stale cake. Perhaps verbal liberties are the only conceivable ones, since the woman in reality is held to be so fleshless, bleak, and buried that other intimacies are unthinkable —the violation of a corpse. She appears as a creature of legend, the snow queen—tall, beautiful, appallingly splendid, all cleanliness and whiteness, living in her empty, silent, frigid palace. Her kisses freeze the heart, her wintry smiles hide a depreciation, her glittering, spotless, squeamish magnificence lulls one to the soft slumber that kills. Criticism and horror of her are the cries of the root and bud, the crackling of the frozen earth longing for a Latin sun; nature screams, but she does not listen. Unapproachable, self-isolated, she is nevertheless as restless and rapacious as a terrible cold wind, and, as in the fairy tale, the little boy can only be released from this glacial death by the hot tears of love—a foreign love.

This threatening apparition has the persistence of a folk belief, a native wonder of the world, exported along with the cowboys and gangsters to other countries. The foreign traveler to America is no doubt fascinated. Skyscrapers, energy, wealth, automobiles—these at least can be seen; their weight, undeniability, even their moral content (the obvious is also sometimes true) may reasonably chagrin the stranger who prefers in well-known places to refute common observation, even his own at times, in favor of a fresh judgment. At first glance the American woman he has heard about—and she is our own creation—is not on view. Something fantastically contrary meets the eye: the informal, independent, lively American girl whose manner recalls the old evangelists swinging over the Sunday circuit. Far from realizing the wicked somnambulist, she must seem self-confidently forward and as incurably folksy as a peasant. But her very contrariness to expectation only serves to make the legend more profoundly appealing; it becomes not a mere fact of experience but a serious, subtle observation hidden to superficial knowledge. This naive, friendly surface is a disguise, we are told, a marvelous baroque invention masking a soul shriveled by Puritanism and vanity swollen by leisure and power. Bold and generous in appearance, it was a difficult act of the imagination for the American intellectuals, both men and women, to discover that this ordinary woman was in truth as greedy and anarchic as an infant. It is nearly impossible to think of her as a mother, but even that has been made so painless in her belief that a new conscience-stricken generation takes lessons from the doctor in how to have a baby without modern aids, like a pioneer woman in a lonely cabin.

Mrs. Trollope describes the life of a rich Philadelphia lady in the 1820's. The lady has a handsome house with elegant furnishings, servants, and abundant leisure, but her existence is as cheerless and repetitive as a squaw's. She does her needlework, goes to the missionary society in the afternoon, where she has bare bland conversations with other privileged Philadelphia ladies, and no conversation at all with her husband, who returns from his work in the evenings, "shakes hands with her, spits, and dines." Mrs. Trollope regrets the lack of social drama in this destiny, yet even this unbroken, dreary life, calm and endless as the prairie, must seem one of excellent serenity to the young American man of the present—at least it spares him the frustrated expectation and consequent peevishness he professes to find in every American woman now.

The contemporary woman supposedly lives in a solar emptiness warmed occasionally by the dim sounds of the soap opera, and of this fearful nothingness she, and not her husband, is the complete master. Bored and idle, she may play bridge in the afternoon, but even the card game is only a pantomime, a wordless ballet simulating sociability, for she has no true friendship or communication with other women. Her evenings are more in-

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teresting because they suggest the rudiments of social intercourse, although always an exchange of remarkable hardness and intimidation. Silence often prevails because she cannot discuss business, politics, or art, but the silence is poisonous; it demands, defies, and dominates with the power of some querulous, bitter, festering law of her own spirit. The evenings end with a triumph, which means she has easily found a way to attack her husband's self-esteem before she retires to the twin beds. It would not be believed if it were suggested that this creature, in between barks and bites, does three times as much housework as the European woman of the same class and purse, who gloriously does none at all, enjoying placidly the comforts of a $12-a-week full-time French slave or the $12-a-month nunlike, dawn to midnight, devotions of the Italian domestic.

But this is only the *Vogue* model, captured like an Ivory Soap carving as the American Wife. There are other images of the American woman that haunt and belittle the American man and chill the Europeans —one is that absurd busybody knocking at the door of culture, or only killing time in the drowsy afternoon lecture hall, a sour figure with a roll of concert tickets in her over-the-shoulder bag. Even to see her toiling up the steps of foreign museums makes us wince—we have seen her before, so many times, in travel books and English novels, mispronouncing the names, grabbing it all with that overwhelming denseness and energy. Americans laugh shrilly at this yearning mind because of the closeness of the young men, particularly the articulate ones, to the sensibilities of the mother. Dancing lessons, piano exercises, the drawing box, illustrated classics, and children's encyclopedias—these things embarrass us sorely. The effort, the effort! we remember shamefully, seeing it all as rather priggish and unreal; in Europe, however, Americans begin to think learning and art are breathed in, unconsciously, from the atmosphere and even though the grossly unmoving modern pink and blue Virgin on the most beautiful, ancient altar is a slap in the face, we soon, by a miracle of hospitality, forget it and only our own contemporary bad taste remains.

But what is so much to be scorned after all in this culture-eager woman? Women are always, according to Schopenhauer, the guardians of the spirit; this hunger for art and excitement is a "natural" role, the very opposite of a humiliating compensation for sexual denials. We sympathize with the peasant woman in fiction who saves her egg money so that her son may become a gentleman in the city, or treasures some little book or picture or gift that will stimulate her children to a less laborious and more intellectual life. Yet the moonstruck wife of a prosperous businessman who clings to her pure and "inspiring" friendship with a weak but gifted young man, reads novels, and likes to discuss the theater is condemned as unbalanced. Her eager and, of course, too freely given appreciation of "fine things" in no way preempts the male prerogative, which is still the grand one of the highest creator of art, philosophy, and science. (That this should still be true for women, after the vote, freedom, wider experience, is one of the jokes of history.)

A RECENT European testimony, Simone de Beauvoir's *L'Amérique au jour le jour*, comes upon the subject of American women with a bald and instructive directness. A busy observer in her own right, this author's impressions are not confined to sight, but modified by her knowledge of prevailing intellectual opinion in America and particularly by American self-criticism. This criticism is a spectacular cultural achievement and to try to disavow it in the formation of one's own mind and opinion is altogether fruitless and stunting. Disagreement with a specific point of the acid verdict is not likely with us to be a wholesale endorsement of the national character so much as a criticism of a criticism, a yearly revision that seldom disturbs the basic text.

Mlle. de Beauvoir's first-hand impressions of American women are so cordial that they have, in this way, a kind of originality. She notes the women's clean hair, amazing health, the good humor of the college girls,

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their spontaneity, courtesy, good will, and their conversational freedom without impudence. With more than a hint of irony, de Tocqueville, a century back, declared himself "frequently surprised and almost frightened at the singular address and happy boldness with which young women in America contrive to manage their thoughts and their language amid all the difficulties of free conversation. . . ."

The amiable details in Simone de Beauvoir's picture have considerable weight, but in terms of the whole they are merely flashes of bright color that make an abandoned landscape seem more desolate. It would, perhaps, be impertinent for a stranger to ignore the attitude of the Americans to whom she talked and whom she had read, and so, against the uncertain evidence of the senses, the venerated, hostile opinion asserts itself. She notes the rancorous accent in which American men talk about women and remembers that it is a commonplace for them to say the women are frigid; she talks of the battle of the sexes, the frustration of the women, the absence of purpose in their lives, the fact that American men don't like them. And the most overwhelming statement is this: "The tragedy of those who have discovered passionate love in Europe and can no longer live with their cold husbands or wives is a stereotype."

THE buzz of this theme song is certainly very loud among American intellectuals, but, at its best, it is a miserly way of expressing the American character even in its Puritan aspect and omits the fact that the Puritan heritage is complex, varied, culturally expressive. True, to the American, the voluptuary suggests the pathological—with us love is not an "art," nakedness not without its embarrassments, the body often an uneasy and improbable partner of the soul. We do not have the instinct or the habit of the rich and elaborate European flirtation, the gift for relaxed psycho-sexual drama. The American finds many things outrageously comical that are at the very heart of the European romance. Seeing this, not in *fact,* but in a parody comparable to the parody we present of ourselves for Europe, we cannot quite take comfortably the heavy-lidded coquetry of the middle-aged French couple (one of Europe's advantages being the recognition that ardent feelings do not disappear at twenty-five), the dark wisdom of the experienced matron with her opportune flatteries one moment and her tolerant smiles another, the luxurious, smothering drapery of the rendezvous, the hard-working charm and artifice that perfume the air. The scene seems to us all ludicrous movement, quickness, dramatic posturing, like one of those speedy silent films of the boudoir—heaves and sighs, black-eyed winks, muscular avowals. Our only equivalent is an imaginary and tired comedienne: the Southern belle with her ruffles, sky-blue costumes, flirtatious physiognomy—the decorations of a romantic pose which the "plain man" loathes because it is calculated and therefore, in his view, spotted and unappetizing like an overripe peach. Love can never be an art with us or even exceptionally artful, because we think it real only when it appears without human aid; it is rain from heaven, not the work of a clever imagination.

It is only a slight exaggeration to say that elaborate concern for "holding a man" or making a woman "feel desirable" are attitudes that would seriously wound the pride of Americans and can be, without humiliation, invoked only during a crisis, when a loss is threatened. In spite of the advertisers' effort to stimulate these activities, we are still not able to practice them with enough seriousness or fundamental belief to please the Europeans. Inclination is the only motive acknowledged as honestly relevant to relations between the sexes, and inclination is mysterious. It is not a drama or something earned or deserved; it is a gift, a sort of election. To marry for the most honorable human needs—loneliness, insecurity, desire for a family, *faute de mieux*—these are not quite enough and it may even be said that we feel, superstitiously, that the presence of these needs is hostile to true love. They inject a worldly and universal factor into a personal mystery—and to marry for money or physical comfort is almost a sin and certain to bring

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misery and repentance! Inclination is of course exclusive in its object, which is why Americans are so sentimental about love and so clumsy in the casual love affair. When a married person finds himself attracted to an outsider he is in agony and must make a choice immediately; without the choice, representing the exclusiveness of love, he cannot be certain he loves either one.

THIS intensely romantic conception, exclusive, mysterious, self-questioning, unworldly, and impractical, is not a rude and coarse hatred of pleasure, a narrowing of experience out of fear and shame, but a *kind of idealism* which seems to exhilarate and heighten the existence of most Americans. It closes its eyes to man's animal nature, is too pious and extreme, and carries its own doubt and despair with it, but it is just this that makes it the normal expression of a progressive, democratic culture. Love is not pure sensation or need or understanding; like the Bill of Rights, it is a noble possibility that both inspires and constantly accuses. That people are often able to believe they can live by this romantic idealism, contrary to "nature" as it is, reinvigorates it apparently. The picture of the old couple married fifty years gets a prominent spot in the small-town newspapers, and even our high divorce rate, offering the fallen another chance for the ideal, is an expression of it.

Tenderness and the permission of equality between men and women are the surest signs of love in America, but it is just this aim, which is not of course always our practice, that has come to be considered an insidious degradation of both men and women. It is felt that tenderness has degenerated into providing luxuries for the women and that the man who cannot do so suffers intense guilt. There is no doubt that success is highly valued in America, but American women also have a particular fondness for ne'er-do-wells and failures, of which there are always enough to satisfy the demand. I should imagine most European women would think this impossibly crude and unreal. The pride taken by well brought up, pampered American girls in the impoverished intellectual—anyone who can put a sentence together, read books, or listen to decent music—frequently amounts to slavishness. To love such a man, without hope of what is ordinarily meant by success, is evidence of having kept faith with the ideal, of having accepted a passion which is simply itself, unalloyed by worldly motive.

There is a dismal sadism and regression in the contempt for American women one finds nowadays in novels and hears in conversation. Their health, outspokenness, and much-exaggerated leisure are scorned; the ravaging labor of a peasant woman is raised to a high moral principle and with fantastic disingenuousness the poor, defeated European prostitute is sometimes believed to be humanly and aesthetically superior. What most startles one in these notions is the absence of a certain kind of painful emotion supposed to be typical of Americans—our feelings that the daughter who becomes a prostitute, the village without doctors, the hours spent beating the laundry on the riverbank, are the very heart of tragedy. We are often accused of triviality in this respect and perhaps we are the only country that wants to send the leukemia victim a present so that he may have his Christmas in November—a gruesome notion of the last pleasures of life, even a child's life. And yet our squeamishness about physical suffering and deprivation are a large part of what is most free and just in our character.

It's hard to know how seriously to take the chronic, soggy indignation about the "freedom" of American women. Strangely enough, only Henry James, an expatriate, considered a snob and an aristocrat, seems to have truly enjoyed the independence, luck, and "un-European" charms of this New World creature. To him her virtues and inadequacies were an invigorating and romantically honorable expression of the American spirit. He would have thought it cruel to expect her to deviate from the moral and psychological inhibitions of the whole culture, unimaginative to despise her aspirations and candor, and inconceivable that American men, born in the same culture, do not really like or understand her—all of which it clearly is.

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ISRAEL FACES ITS ARAB MINORITY PROBLEM

The Native Within the Gates

JUDD L. TELLER

ISRAEL'S treatment of her Arab residents, today numbering 170,000 or more, has been the subject of press and Knesset discussion almost from the day the new state was born. This preoccupation with her Arab minority on the part of Israel would not, in any case, be surprising: Jews have so often suffered from discriminatory treatment that their sense of justice and guilt has been honed sharp and fine. But there is more to it than that. Officially Israel proudly proclaimed itself to be a "*Jewish* state," and the jealous aspiration for a state "of our own," "Jewish in every fiber of its being," played no small part in the driving urge to found and build the "Jewish" homeland. It is, of course, true that under Israeli law and practice this does not preclude the Arabs from retaining their own cultural identity; and indeed both the ancient Mosaic code and the contemporary Western conception of citizenship to which the Israelis subscribe enjoin that all inhabitants, regardless of race, creed, or color, are to share equally in the privileges and responsibilities of Israeli statehood. However, on all sides there is an awareness of the gap between precept and practice. For equality to be woven into the fabric of daily life a spirit of generous reciprocity and mutual trust must exist. Today this does not prevail; it is, of course, the fault of the Arab as well as of the Israeli, since a basic deterrent is the obdurate attitude of the Arab states on the question of peace.

IT MUST be remembered that the Arabs in Israel are not just a minority in the usual sense of the word. They are a defeated enemy, with all that this signifies in mutual fear, resentment, and suspicion. Not only are old wounds still unhealed; there is the recurrent threat of their reopening. Accordingly, the attitude of Israelis to Arabs, and vice versa, is subject to wide fluctuations under the varying pressure of external events.

Last spring, there was near unanimity in Israel that the time had come for the removal of many of the wartime emergency restrictions against the Arab population. But sentiment in this direction has abated in the past few months, along with Israeli press discussion of the Arab minority problem, under the impact of the crisis with Syria over the Huleh, the Mufti-engineered assassination of King Abdullah, and the explosions of Arab nationalism in Iran and Egypt. The Israeli forces were put on the alert, and even as the Zionist delegates were meeting in Jerusalem, David Ben Gurion and the military command were anticipating a "second round." In this atmosphere of tension many Israelis had a second thought. They began to wonder whether such nightly incidents as the cutting of telegraph wires and waterpipes between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv and the attacks on Israeli sentries are really perpetrated by infiltrators alone, without complicity of Israeli Arabs, including many who

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AN OPPRESSED (and depressed) minority in the midst of a Jewish state would be a historical irony and moral blunder too great to be tolerated; and Jewish minds and consciences both in Israel and abroad have been troubled by insistent rumor that just such a development has been in process. JUDD L. TELLER, a seasoned and sympathetic analyst of the Israeli scene and recently returned from a stay in Israel, here describes the anxious concern over the issue manifested there, and soberly weighs the difficulties which today impede a solution of the problem. Mr. Teller's most recent contribution to COMMENTARY, "American Zionism Moves Toward Clarity," appeared in our November issue.

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perhaps voted in the Israeli Knesset elections.

Other disconcerting episodes have served in recent months to underline the complexity and explosiveness of the Arab minority problem. Perhaps most revealing of these is the case of the town of Majdal.

IN THE days of the British Mandate, Majdal was a primitive, small-scale Manchester where Arab women and children, working under sweatshop conditions, produced textiles for Arab employers. The Israeli government and Histadrut, Israel's Federation of Labor, determinedly set about to convert Majdal into a showcase of Israel's enlightened Arab policy. The best the government could afford in medical and educational services was made available in Majdal, child labor was banished, working hours reduced, wages raised, and one-third of the total adult population of 2,500 were enrolled in the town's three major cooperative enterprises—the weavers' and farmers' cooperative societies and the credit union.

The Communists sneered that Majdal was Ben Gurion's "Potemkin village." Early this year, under supplementary armistice arrangements between Israel and the Arab states, the Majdal Arabs were formally given the choice of becoming Israeli nationals or departing for the Gaza region, an Egyptian-held, overpopulated, desolate shore-strip in the Negev. Nowhere is the plight of the Arab refugees more desperate than in Gaza. Yet most of these Arabs chose it over Majdal.

Abba Eban, chief of the Israeli delegation, gave the following explanation in a statement before the United Nations Security Council on October 16, 1950:

". . . Many Arabs in Majdal had their families in the Gaza area, which is under Egyptian control. Between June 14 and September 19, 1,159 Arabs applied to our civic authorities in Majdal for permission to cross with their dependents into Gaza. These applicants were animated by many motives. The proximity of this area to the frontier, with the consequent application of security regulations; the constant Egyptian threats to renew the war; and the relative value of the Israeli pounds in relation to neighboring currencies—all these considerations played their part, in addition to the compelling desire for the reuniting of families. This was a desire which had been responsible for the migration of a much larger number of Arabs from Arab territory into Israel itself."

Mapam and the Communists, however, seized upon the Majdal departures as confirming their indictment of government policy. The fact that several thousand Arabs preferred the squalor of Gaza to life in much-touted Majdal was striking evidence, they argued, of a profound insecurity for which government policy was to blame. Joining in this charge were members of the liberal-humanistic Ihud society for Arab-Jewish reconciliation, founded by the late Judah L. Magnes. At the same time, several extreme rightist critics argued that the instance of Majdal confirmed the futility of "overindulging" the Arabs, that the Arabs would never barter ancient loyalties for special privileges, and that the Arab minority is a potential fifth column.

Other episodes have been interpreted so as to reinforce the arguments both for greater latitude and for less "indulgence." There is the case, still pending in the courts, of Abed il Al and his family, who live in Om il Faraj, a Galilee village, and whom the military authorities had ordered deported as infiltrees. Al, admitting that he had fled the village at the outset of Arab-Israeli hostilities, claims that he has lived there all his life, that it is ridiculous to brand him an infiltree, that his troubles in fact started only after he had refused to agree to a proposal by the military that he exchange his rich land in Galilee for an inferior parcel in another part of the country, and that if he lost his case all other Arabs in that village soon would face a similar choice because a nearby kibbutz was determined to increase its own holdings by annexing Arab lands. In a somewhat similar case, the Israeli high court has upheld an Arab claim and nullified an evacuation order.

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THE grievances of Israel's Arabs have been presented most fully by a Christian Arab lawyer, Elias Kousa, of Haifa, in articles and letters to the editor of *Al Yom* (the government-subsidized, Jewish-edited Arab daily), the Jerusalem *Post* (a pro-government English-language daily), and *Ner* (bulletin of Ihud).

He has presented three major examples of alleged discriminatory legislation and practices:

"The prevention of resident Arab males above the age of fifteen from rejoining their parents. . . .

"The Absentees' Property Law of 1950 . . . whereby a person physically and lawfully present is deemed absent for the single purpose of depriving him of the right to control, administer, and enjoy the income from his properties. . . .

"The law enacted by the Provisional Government and subsequently ratified by the Knesset, enabling the Minister of Agriculture to take possession of any land allegedly left uncultivated, in pursuance of which many Arab cultivators present in Israel have been arbitrarily dispossessed of their properties without compensation."

Supporters of government policy reply that Mr. Kousa's allegations are compounded of half-truths; but they also admit that Arab residents are subject to a considerable measure of discriminatory emergency legislation, and will remain so for the duration of the existing state of war between Israel and the Arab states. Agreeing that this can hardly be otherwise, two friends of Israel, Richard H. S. Crossman, British Member of Parliament, and Jon Kimche, British journalist, have nonetheless stated that this special legislation places the Arabs in the status of "second-class citizens." The Jerusalem *Post* carried the Kimche articles but took issue with them: "No contribution to the solution of this problem is to be made by the use of such easily misinterpreted labels as 'second-class citizens.' The phrase can only be used with justification when individuals or groups as such, on principle and permanently, irrespective of special conditions, are made to suffer disability. . . . [The phrase 'second-class citizen' is used] as if the Arab states, and the Arabs of Palestine, had not made war against Israel, as if a stable peace had already been achieved, and as if they were not living in areas contiguous to the military lines."

THE government, on its part, offers the following in its refutation of Kousa's charges:

Arab males of fifteen cannot be permitted to rejoin their families in the absence of a peace settlement for the simple reason that Levantine males at this age are fully mature adults, capable of bearing arms. In fact, a high proportion of the Mufti's guerrillas in the anti-Jewish riots of 1920, 1929, and 1936-9, and again in the Arab invasion of Israel in 1948, were no older than fifteen. Further, the Israeli military insist that, if the country's frontiers are to be made secure against a second invasion, every last Arab must be removed from the border region. Nor, say they, are they able to police the borders against infiltrees so long as Arab villages in the immediate vicinity constitute stations in an underground railroad. The Arab "irregulars" operating along the Israeli-Syrian and Israeli-Jordan frontiers undoubtedly have allies in the Israeli Arab villages contiguous to the border; police raids have disclosed hundreds of infiltrees hiding in these villages. It is not feasible to differentiate between infiltrees and guerrillas, since many of the former, whose case makes a strong humanitarian appeal to Israelis, have been found to possess concealed weapons. The military go even further with the demand that Israel's long frontier be dotted with a string of fortress settlements inhabited by Israeli army veterans and their families, physically cordoning off the Israeli Arabs from the Arabs across the frontier.

Supporters of government policy admit that the military may be somewhat excessive in their demands for the ousting of Arabs from "security areas," but there is no warrant for alleging that their real motivation is to enlarge Jewish holdings—however true it is

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that enlarged Jewish holdings result from enforced security measures in some regions. To be sure, in some instances the Absentees' Properties Law works to the disadvantage of Arabs residing in Palestine, but it applies primarily to owners of parcels in security zones who abandoned their homes at the outset of the war and have resided elsewhere in Palestine ever since, and only secondarily to Arab owners of rural property in non-military zones whose property has been settled and cultivated in their absence. Pending a peace settlement, they are not permitted to return; but, it is pointed out, the owner is not summarily deprived of his assets. If he does not wish to wait till peace is restored, he is at liberty to sell his land at his own price, or exchange it for a parcel of his choice elsewhere in the country. And there is always recourse to the courts if the custodian of absentees' properties is slow or unsympathetic.

Kousa's charge that Arab soil is being confiscated on the pretext that it has been left uncultivated is refuted with the explanation that this is an instance of mistaking routine administration for discrimination. The Israeli government, like its predecessor, recognizes squatters' rights; and some large holdings of absentees, for the most part land that had not been cultivated before the establishment of Israel, have been parceled out in fifty-dunam shares (eleven acres). But the beneficiaries have been Arab fellahin. The best refutation of Kousa's charges, government supporters say, is the fact that although the Arab population has diminished by some 80 per cent, its aggregate landholdings are larger than ever before. And to those who (like Abraham Sharon, a Jerusalem journalist) cite this as evidence of the government's policy of "overindulging" the Arabs, the reply is given that a primary motive for adding to Arab landholdings is to increase Israel's agricultural yield and decrease food imports.

THE Arab bill of complaints, however, includes charges of ill-treatment that can by no stretching be ascribed to security needs. Why, for example, Kousa has asked, is the wage scale for Arab labor lower than for Jewish labor, and why is the Arab farmer paid less than the Jew for his produce?

To this the reply is that wage inequity was Britain's bequest. Under Jewish rule there is no longer inequity among professional workers; it has been eliminated in all but a few trades for skilled labor; and the gap is being bridged even for unskilled labor. Under the British Mandate there was a 75 per cent difference between the wages paid Jews and Arabs for the same labor. In Israel, the difference has been reduced to from 10 to 15 per cent.

Nathan ben Nathan, who writes on economics for *Davar*, the Histadrut daily, has offered the following explanation of the government farm policy, and the farm price disparity which is part of it:

The government, in effect, subsidizes the Jewish farmers because this is the only way the government can defray some of the costs to the settlements of absorbing newcomers, encourage experimental farming which brings no immediate return, and bolster the morale of immigrants who have settled reluctantly on the land and whose income, in the first few years, would be very small if left to normal market processes. Now, in plain fact, the Arab farmer performs none of these functions. He does not absorb refugees, he does not cultivate new and desolate land, he engages in no experimental farming, and he needs no encouragement to remain on the land, since for the most part there is little risk of his abandoning an age-old way of life. The Arab may be denied subsidy but, considering his lesser risk, investment, and participation in the national effort, his profits are still fair—and more.

However, Nathan ben Nathan declares, since only the collective and cooperative Jewish settlements perform the functions which the government seeks to subsidize by means of a price-protection policy, the private Jewish farmer is not entitled, any more than the Arab, to obtain the full market price. He should be forced to pay a "withholding tax," which would introduce equality in the prices received for their farm prod-

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ucts by individual Arab and Jewish farmers.

The consumer now pays the same price for Jewish and Arab products, though the Jewish producers get higher prices. Who gets the difference? A Jewish purchasing cooperative was the gratuitous beneficiary until the government some months ago established a special revolving fund which takes the difference between the consumer's price and the Arab farmer's price, and returns it to Arab villages where it is spent on services for Arabs beyond those the government budget permits. For example, in the "Small Triangle" of land acquired by Israel under its armistice agreement with Jordan, 16,000 Israeli pounds from this fund have been used to construct two central stations for the storing of products, 12,000 pounds have been spent in scholarships to students, 20,000 pounds to extend local irrigation works, and 25,000 pounds to expand health services.

All this discussion of Arab grievances, government supporters state, obscures a larger picture in which Arab welfare has been greatly enhanced. In pre-Israeli days, the fellah was virtually a tenant farmer; he would mortgage away next season's harvest in order to obtain seed; because his own parcel of land was too small to sustain him, he had to hire himself out to others at the height of the season. Under Israeli rule, his holdings have been increased and the government provides him with free seed. He now does all his purchasing and selling through cooperatives, thus gaining time and money; he can, by hiring a tractor from the cooperative society at minimal rates, cultivate more land with less effort; and if he requires loans there are always the reasonable interest rates of the cooperative credit union. The few large Arab landowners who are left groan that government policy has made the fellahin haughty and more indolent than ever. There has even developed an Israeli equivalent of the seasonal Mexican "wetback" labor problem in our own country: Arab employers bring infiltrees across the border and, under threat of exposing them to the authorities for deportation, force them to work for pre-Israeli wage scales.

Indeed, defenders of government policy point out, a veritable revolution has taken place in Israel's Arab society of which critics deliberately take no notice. Most significant, perhaps, is the rise of the trade union movement to a central position. Prewar patriarchal Arab society has been replaced by a trade-union-centered society which helps bring the Arabs closer to the Jewish population. Arab women have become emancipated; they have now begun to join trade unions, and some even sit in on councils with men and help shape policies for their trades or shops. Democratically elected village councils are to be set up soon throughout the Arab countryside. There will be elections in one hundred villages at first, including even border areas, where military governors will have to relinquish some of their authority to the elected councils.

Yet there is no doubt that some Arabs—or at least the articulate among them—are dissatisfied and disgruntled. Recently a symposium on Arab-Jewish relations was arranged in Haifa by Mapai's Young Guard at which two leaders of the Israel Labor League, the Arab counterpart and affiliate of Histadrut, were invited to speak. Salim Jubrin recalled to his audience that only two years ago they had faced each other "across the barricades." "Many of us have since realized," he said, "that your victory offers new prospects to both our peoples if we join our efforts in mutual confidence." Unfortunately, he observed, neither the government nor Mapai has yet formulated or implemented a clear-cut policy with regard to the Arab nationals of Israel. He hinted at the ambivalence of present policy, and in conclusion he "prayed it was not too late to rectify these errors." Fawsi Shadhi, the other Arab speaker, endorsed these views. After the defeat of the Arab invasion, Arab youth, deeply disillusioned in its own leadership, hoped that Israel might bring them "the personal freedom and social release pledged by Arab demagogues; they now feel that

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they had hoped in vain. Unless the government does something about it now, it will have only itself to blame."

The references were oblique, the speeches were typical circumlocutionary Arab rhetoric. Yet what they pointed to was the central dilemma of the government's Arab policy: the discrepancy between the efforts to raise living standards, provide educational and health services, introduce democracy into the villages—and the continuation of military and emergency rule for the Arab population. The Israeli army sometimes acts as if the Arabs are the inhabitants of an occupied country. Persons as diverse as Nathan Alterman, who writes poetry on current events in *Davar*, the editors of the Mapam newspaper *Al Hamishmar*, and the editors of *Herut*, published by the former Irgun, have all criticized the behavior of soldiers searching Arab villages for infiltrees.

However, even if all emergency legislation were suspended, and all military rule lifted, the psychological irritants would still persist; however hard the Jews might try to forget their victory, the Arabs cannot forget their defeat. Michael Assaf, a Jew and Mapai leader, editor of the official Arab daily newspaper *Al Yom*, counseled against anticipating too much immediate success from whatever Arab policy is adopted. He quoted an Arab friend of his as saying: "You Jews could not forget Palestine for two thousand years. Yet you expect us to forget it in the space of a mere two years." This feeling was evident, too, in Jubrin's speech. "I am an Arab and proud of my people," he said. "You must accept me as I am. Do not urge us to assimilate. We shall not. It is best for you to remember that you shall always be a tiny people in an Arab sea."

How can Israel, remembering this, act so as to take it into account? Consider the dilemma which faces Israeli education authorities. There are today seventy Arab schools in Israel with a total school population of 17,000, and more are being opened almost every month. Never has education been more available to the Arab in Palestine. But what are these schools to teach about the Arabs past and present? Arab textbooks in mandated Palestine conveyed to the pupils a passionate awareness that Palestine was and would remain an Arab land. They have been rewritten since, to present Zionism in a new light and Israel as the home by birthright of the Jew. What can a man like Jubrin feel about this?

Even Jews disagree among themselves. In Haifa, a Jewish teacher exhorted his Arab pupils to be "good citizens of Israel and loyal sons of the Arab people." Michael Assaf, writing in *Hamizrach Hachadash*, quarterly of the Israel Orientalist Society, branded this as a doctrine of incompatibility. In the context of current events and of pan-Arab nationalist propaganda, Assaf said, a "loyal Arab" must wish to drive the Jews into the sea.

I have heard Arabs argue, on the other hand, that the term Israeli is, in intent and practice, really racially exclusive. Though used technically to denote a national of the State of Israel, it is taken in the usage of the country as implying the "reassembling of the dispersed Jews into Zion."

In the recent Knesset elections there were several lists of Arab candidates. Three of these lists were sponsored by Mapai. When Prime Minister David Ben Gurion set about forming a government, there was hardly a person in Israel who seriously considered the possibility that, to assure himself of the parliamentary support of the three pro-Mapai Arab lists, Mr. Ben Gurion would invite Arabs to join his cabinet. Yet that is exactly what he has done. This action contrasts, to say the least, with the expulsion from the Iraqi Senate of its one Jewish member—a prominent anti-Zionist.

The passionate political activity of the Jewish parties further contributed to muddying the waters. Although no more than 30,000 Arabs were eligible to vote in the first Knesset elections early in 1949, Israel's political parties courted them as if their votes alone could decide the outcome.

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Concentrated in rural areas, the Arabs had few votes to offer in the more recent municipal elections, yet this did not restrain the Sephardic and Oriental bloc, a fictitious label for a few well-to-do men seeking public office, from making a grand play for Arab votes. Thus Police Minister Shitreet, a member of this bloc, reminded a rally of Arabs that "Arabdom and Sephardic Jewry had a long tradition in common." Mr. Shitreet, interestingly enough, has since become a member of Mapai.

There has been some concern, publicly expressed, over the effects of Jewish electioneering on Arab-Jewish relations in Israel. All campaigning is characterized by boundless charges, exaggeration of grievances, and inordinate promises. Westerners take it in their stride. The Arabs, however, have no experience with the lustiness of democratic procedures. When the opposition parties, in their appeals for Arab votes, accuse the government of fabulous transgression, and particularly attack its Arab policy, the Arab deduces that if the Jews so readily admit that much, then the government must be guilty of infinitely worse.

Nahum Ziv-Av, a Jewish authority on Arab affairs, proposed in an article in *Davar* that all Jewish political parties be called upon to practice moderation or, better still, totally suspend their political activities among the Arabs until the latter acquire some sophistication; and Yehuda ben Aryeh, writing in *Ashmoret,* a widely circulated weekly published by Mapai's Young Guard, has made the more moderate proposal that all Communist activity among the Arabs be summarily banned. Indeed, the Communist party in Israel has been guilty of the most violent and unrestrained appeals to Arab chauvinism. Several Communist election rallies in Arab villages were followed by mob attacks, in one case fatal, on Jewish military and police. However, if the Communist party is to be banned for the Arabs, it must also be banned for all Israelis. There is little sentiment in Israel favoring such a course.

This brings us back again to the central dilemma of Israel's Arab policy. How can even a democratic state remove its special restrictions against a section of the population that has been at least a passive enemy in war, so long as this war has not been resolved? And how can Israel ignore, for a long time to come, the fact that the sympathies of at least some of Israel's Arabs—despite anything the government can do for them materially, and despite the fact that Palestine's numerous Christian Arabs have no illusions about what their prospects would be in a Moslem state—must lie with their fellow Arabs of the surrounding countries?

Many Arab intellectuals who are cooperating with the Israeli government have themselves been incapable of finding any reasonable *modus vivendi.* They cannot consider themselves simply "Israelis," differing only in religion and language from the Jewish majority of their co-nationals—for that state in its every lineament is the expression of the desire of that majority to create a land that should be its own. The personal situation of these people is truly pathetic.

The Jews are equally self-conscious about their Arab minority. Some glib publicists have tried to suggest to the world that photographs of Jewish and Arab notables sitting cross-legged and smiling over a common bowl of rice and lamb give a full account of the matter. Actually, everyone knows that it is infinitely more complex. The Jews cannot help remembering that they will always be a tiny island in an Arab sea that shows no signs of relenting in its hostility. The Arabs cannot help remembering that they are residents of a "Jewish state." Until this ominous paradox is resolved, Jewish policy will be an uneasy compromise between what conscience dictates and what exigency seems to permit.

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THE BIG SLIDE

A Story

ALBERT HALPER

THE first big snow of winter was falling as my pal Joey Pisano and I came walking from Ashland Avenue and turned into Lake Street. The large flakes sifted past the black Elevated in the gray afternoon, falling like pieces of silent cotton. Up above, on the El ties, the snow was bedding down.

"I bet it's gonna keep up all night," Joey told me. "I can feel it in the air."

"I'm glad tomorrow is Saturday," I answered. "No school."

As we approached my father's grocery, Joey said, "If the snow keeps up, maybe we can fight the Carrol Avenue Indians tomorrow morning."

"Where at?"

"In the lots near the tracks."

That sounded fine. I nodded in agreement. When we got close to the store, I saw my father, his wide face thoughtful and ruminative, staring from the windows near a display of laundry soap. Seeing us, he moved hastily away, his face showing no sign of recognition. I knew what that meant; business had been slow all day. Past our store, I noticed old man Schneider working over a pair of men's shoes in the window of his shoe repair shop. With his grayish bald head bent forward, he was pounding away, his mouth full of small nails. His left hand flew up to his lips after each blow and when it came away it had a new nail between thumb and forefinger. Joey and I went over to watch, hearing the dull muffled thuds behind the plate-glass window.

Old man Schneider always liked to have an audience. He smiled and waved to us through the dirty window without losing the rhythm of his hammering. Every time his left hand flew to his lip for another nail he bared his teeth which looked green in the strange sifted light coming through his plate-glass window.

"When I grow up," Joey said thoughtfully, "I'm not going to be a shoemaker." I remained silent. "I don't want to put nails in my mouth," Joey continued.

"What would you want to put in your mouth?"

"Candy. I'd like a job in the Bunte candy factory."

"Yah!" I gave him a shove and we began to wrestle, playfully. As we scuffled before Mr. Schneider's window the snow kept falling, whitening our caps and shoulders. It was wonderful, fooling around in the snow and blowing steam from our nostrils like horses. I don't know how Joey felt but I knew I could pull down the whole Elevated system with my two hands if I wanted to. When we heard a rap against the window we turned. The shoemaker, grinning and waving his hammer, was egging us on. Removing the nails from his mouth, he reached under his apron and took two cents from his trouser pocket, holding them up to us.

"He means if I throw you I get the two cents," Joey said. But his utterance was his undoing. Even as he spoke I put my right foot out, and tripped him. He fell hard, not hurting himself, landing on his back. As he came for me again old man Schneider rapped against the window with the pennies and I went inside his leather-smelling shop to claim the coins.

"Sometimes you throw him, sometimes he throws you, eh?" he chuckled. "That's goot, very goot! Exercise is always goot!"

When I came outside with my prize money, I saw Joey hopping on the sidewalk as though he were trying to keep warm. "What are you doing, dancing a jig because you lost?"

ALBERT HALPER's novels include *Union Square* (1933), *Sons of the Fathers* (1940), and *Only an Inch from Glory* (1943), and he has published short pieces in *Harper's*, the *Atlantic Monthly*, the *New Yorker*, and numerous other periodicals. Mr. Halper was born in Chicago in 1904, and attended Northwestern University.

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"No. I'm working up a slide where we were wrestling. This is soft snow. C'mon and help me work up a slide."

We hadn't slid for almost nine months, since last winter, and I got excited. In Chicago, where all the streets and sidewalks are flat, it's difficult to slide or to coast. Kids who live out in the country where there are hills, or in cities with steep streets, will hardly understand how Joey and I felt about sliding. Why, whenever we saw a big sand pile near an excavating job we used to go screwy, running up and down to the top of it, throwing our chests out and yelling we were Napoleon. That's what being born and raised in a flat town does to you.

So when Joey told me the snow was right and he was working up a slide, I pitched in and began helping him. First, we stamped the snow down hard, where we'd been tussling. Then Joey went back about a dozen steps, ran, and tried to slide over it. It was rough going at first, because the snow wasn't smooth yet. After he tried, I backed up a dozen steps, got off to a good run and slid. My try was a little better because it came after Joey's.

WE MADE about ten tries and were going good when I heard someone rapping on the window with a key. It wasn't old man Schneider this time. Turning, I saw it was my father. He looked sore.

"I got to go in," I said hurriedly to Joey. "I guess he wants me to work in the store."

"Gee, that reminds me. I have to run some errands for my mother too. So long."

I watched Joey break into a trot, then I turned into the grocery. Dragging my feet, I closed the door behind me. I guess I didn't close it quickly enough.

"Shut it," my father shouted. "The stove is going, do you want all the heat to go outside?" He glared at me; then, with an effort, he smiled. "Well, Dave, what did you learn in school today? What date did Washington cross the Delaware, 1776?" He kept smiling but his smile wasn't successful; business was too bad. I knew he must have been standing behind the windows for over an hour, waiting for a customer to come in.

"Not 1776, Pa," I said. "He crossed a little later. In the wintertime."

"Is that so? I thought it was during the summer. Would you mind unpacking that case of catsup and putting it on the second shelf? I'm sure a lot of customers will want to buy that catsup."

I got the hammer, opened the top of the wooden box and started placing the catsup on a shelf.

"Turn all the labels to the front!" my father shouted. "The customers want to see what brand it is, don't they?"

Reaching up, I turned all the labels toward the front, so that each bottle stared at the store with its identical face. My father moistened his lips. "That's better," he said in a calmer voice. "Now the customers don't have to strain their eyes."

The door opened and a woman came in. She bought a quart of milk and a loaf of bread, paid for the items and walked out. My father made one cent on the milk and two cents profit on the bread. Then Mrs. Wolski, a widow, came in. She bought a can of peas, a pound of onions, and four apples.

"I'll pay you on Saturday," she said, "when my son in Milwaukee sends me the check." My father put the things into a paper bag and she walked out.

Outside the snow kept falling. It had thinned somewhat but it still looked beautiful. Every so often the wind blew some of it against the windows and it made a small sound like cats scratching at the glass. The arc lamps had come on and through the dusk outside I could see trucks and wagons hurrying along Lake Street like silent ghosts in the falling snow. My father waited until it was almost dark in the store, then reached up and pulled the chain of the big lamp. The gas exploded with a pop and made a singing noise for a minute, until the mechanism up there grew warm; then the gas flowed evenly and the big globe shone with steady light, making the canned goods, the scale, and a bag of new yellow onions glisten in the bright store. I was dying to get out into the snow, to run, and work up the new slide some more.

"Any orders to deliver, Pa?" I asked.

My father shook his head. He was wearing his long white grocer's apron, which was soiled around the waist. It was a little too long for him because my mother, who had made it, wasn't an expert apron-maker. As my father stood there short and stocky, I wondered how long we'd be here on Lake

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Street. Our previous store, on Fulton Street, hadn't lasted more than six months; and we had been here on Lake Street about the same length of time already.

"Guess I'll read a library book," I said, looking toward the windows. I picked up my book about young pearl divers in the South Seas and started reading, glancing every so often toward the street.

"All right," my father suddenly shouted, "go ahead outside! I know you want to get messed up in the snow!"

I hadn't said anything—I hadn't said a word!

"You don't have to talk! It's all on your face, so go ahead!"

I kept staring at my book, making no move.

"Go ahead! Who's stopping you? Am I a bad father?"

Still I didn't move. At that moment I heard Joey Pisano's low whistle and I looked up. He was motioning me to come outside; his hat and coat were white with snow and he was grinning through the window. "C'mon out," he yelled. "I ran all the errands for my mother already."

I PUT my book down quietly and, without looking at my father, I went out. When I reached Joey he was already feeling around with his feet for the slide we had started to work up before. The snow had covered it.

"Here it is!" he cried. "I found it!" He began kicking the snow away and I helped him. Pretty soon, exploring with the soles of our shoes, we could feel the icy surface under the snow, the icy streak running perhaps a dozen feet parallel to my father's store front. As soon as we had discovered it we backed up about twenty feet, then, after breaking into a hard run, started sliding. It was rough going again, but after eight or nine tries we had a pretty good surface. After about twenty runs it was really getting slick, and longer.

Then, glancing up, I saw my father looking through the window. His small ruminative eyes were troubled. In them I could read fear, unhappiness, and hostility. A cold gust of wind, coming from Ashland Avenue, struck me. I turned away quickly. Joey's cries rang in my ears.

"Whee! Whee! Hey, Dave, isn't this like flying?"

"Yeah! It sure is! Let's do it again!"

We repeated our runs. The surface grew slicker and we went faster. Each time we turned to reverse our runs, Mr. Schneider tapped at his window, egging us on; he was grinning and nodding as he kept pounding at his customers' soles and heels.

In fifteen minutes Tom Reilly, who was going home from the butcher's with a package under his arm, joined us. He parked his pound of hamburger near the wall of the shoemaker's shop and started sliding. Then Mike Nagurski and Tom Huss came by and joined in, too. A couple other kids saw us skimming over the sidewalk and pretty soon there were at least ten of us. In the falling snow we must have looked like a file of crazy Indians chasing a phantom enemy in a storm. We did not reverse our runs now, but instead, after completing a slide, we circled back to our initial starting point, so that our moving figures formed a continuous, fast-moving oval, like a hoop snake chasing its tail.

As our speed increased, Mr. Schneider grew excited. Hearing a rapping against his window, we turned. He was striking a coin against his glass, this time a nickel. Grinning and nodding encouragement, he signified from inside his store that the boy who slid the farthest—he stretched his arms wide apart—would win the money.

The gang understood at once. Money-hungry (none of us received more than a few pennies spending money a week), we started yelling and pushing.

"Lemme slide first!"

"Watch my speed!"

"Here comes the champ of Lake Street!"

Joey Pisano was first in line. He galloped into his glide, grunting. It was a pretty good performance but it was not his best; he was too anxious. Tom Huss went next. His was better. Then the others followed, with one boy keeping the marks with a stick. I backed up farther than usual, then got off to a fast start. Upon reaching the ice, I hurled myself forward.

"Boy!" yelled Joey. "Wow!"

I won the contest by about eight inches. Looking excited, Mr. Schneider motioned me to come into his shop and collect the prize money. I went into the small store where the old man clapped me on the back. "Goot! Goot! You won the shampeenship! Goot poy!"

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When I came out with the nickel the fellows were sliding again. They turned around when they heard the shoemaker rapping. He was offering another cash prize, another nickel. Whooping it up, all of us were at it again, more money-hungry than ever.

We ran and slid until we were out of breath, and I didn't win again. Before it was over the old man had paid out six cash prizes, a nickel each. At the end of the sixth contest, which Tom Reilly won, Tom remembered something—the hamburger he had bought for his mother. Looking nervous, he cried: "Gee, I gotta beat it with the meat! But I'll be back tomorrow morning!" In a little while Tom Huss said: "I gotta go home too. My dad will bawl me out if I'm late for supper. But I'll be here tomorrow!" He took one more run, for good luck, then raced home.

During the next ten minutes five more fellows dropped out. They left reluctantly, disappearing up Lake Street in the full darkness which had now descended upon the city. Five of us remained, running faster now because we were fewer.

ALL this while I had seen my father watching intermittently at the window. One or two customers had gone into the store, but after their departures he had taken up his position again, half hidden behind the display of laundry soap.

At last all the boys, except Joey and me, were gone. Gripped by the fear of their parents' tempers, the fellows vanished down their separate streets. Joey and I kept running and coasting over the slide, enjoying it more than ever as it grew slicker all the time. Then Joey said: "I got to beat it home, too! It sure's swell, isn't it? And it ought to last two or three more days!" He blew a long exhalation of cold mist into the air. "So long, be seeing you on the slide tomorrow!" He gave me our secret grip, using three fingers of his right hand, then started running toward Ashland Avenue. I watched him hoofing it until he reached the corner, then I turned into the grocery.

As soon as I came into the store I made myself busy. I played with a row of canned beans that did not need rearranging; I dusted off the glass top of the candy showcase which I had dusted off before.

"Any orders to deliver, Pa?"

My father, who was standing broodingly near the coffee mill, didn't answer me.

"Any orders, Pa?"

"No," he said dully. "You can go home and eat now. Your mother said she wants a cake for dessert. Take the eighteen-cent kind."

I hung around a few more minutes, then I took the cake and left. As I went up Lake Street and felt the snowflakes striking my face, I prayed that the cold weather would hold on for at least four days.

That evening at the dinner table my father seemed gloomier than usual. He complained about the lack of customers. He spoke, bitterly, about the prosperity of other merchants on the street, naming particularly Mr. Schneider, the shoe-repairman.

"Some people have more luck than they deserve. What has he got invested in his store? Has he got stock on the shelves? All he owns is a hammer, a couple pieces of leather, a box of nails, and a fifty-cent shoe form!"

"But he works hard," my mother said tentatively, watching my father's smoldering cheeks. "He pounds all day long, day after day."

"So what? Am I lazy? Don't I put in my time, too?"

My mother said nothing, and one of my older brothers changed the subject. "If this weather keeps up, Pop, I'm going to Switzerland for a weekend of skiing—or maybe I'll fly down to Miami Beach for a swim!"

My father didn't bother to answer Milt. He speared a potato on his plate and began eating it, his jaws grinding stubbornly.

That night, after going to bed, I dreamed I was flying through space. I was skimming above a long, white hill, the soles of my shoes barely touching the slippery slope, going about sixty miles an hour. The wind was rushing against my face and I had that scared but delicious feeling you get in exciting sports that need quickness of movement and speed. Slope after slope passed under me, my life became a series of glorious descents in a white world where flat streets, schoolhouses, and errands did not exist.

WHEN I awoke I held my breath for a moment. As I sat up in bed and looked out the window I gripped a shred of my

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dream tightly. There, beyond the pane, reinforcing my half-awake thoughts, was the white world of the city.

"It didn't melt while I was asleep!" I told myself. I dressed hurriedly, getting ready for school, then remembered something. Today was Saturday—no classroom!

I dressed in record time, ate a quick breakfast, and started putting on my hat and coat.

"What's your hurry?" my mother cried. "You didn't finish your oatmeal, and you took only a sip of milk! Where are you rushing?"

"The slide!" I answered, halfway to the door already.

"Take your rubbers!"

"No! I can't slide with them on!" I was pounding down the stairs to the street, heading for my father's grocery.

Reaching the sidewalk, I walked east. When I turned the corner I saw the fellows in the distance. But unlike yesterday, they weren't running and gliding. I broke into a hard gallop. I came up to them, breathless.

"What—what happened?"

They didn't have to speak. Overhead was the cold clear sky, so it couldn't be the weather's fault. I stared down at the ruined slide, my throat thick. Pitted by scattered handfuls of table salt, the icy surface was even now melting away under my gaze. I could see sections of gray sidewalk under the new-born slush.

"Who did it?" I cried.

Nobody knew. After a long silence, there were a lot of theories, a lot of shouting. "I saw Mrs. Kowalk looking at it. You know how she hates kids!"

"What about Hintz the barber? Remember how he came after us with a club that time when someone broke his window?"

"Naw, I bet it's George the junkie. He wants to get even with us because we pester him."

We had our theories, and all of them sounded logical, but we had no proof. As we stared at the fast-melting slide, our anger mounted. There was no use starting another one, for the snow-covered surface of the nearby sidewalk was already rough and bumpy from a full day's pedestrian traffic. Our slide had been situated in a perfect spot, too; it had been laid, by chance, over a stretch of sidewalk that was beginning to sag so that there had actually been a slight downgrade to it. Looking at it made Joey sick.

"I'll kill whoever done it!" Joey said.

"No, you won't, I'll murder him first!" Tom Huss cried.

"That's right," I yelled. "We ought to blind him!"

We shouted our threats up and down the street. The sky was turning a dull gray. The air was getting colder. As we shouted we stamped our feet to keep warm. I thought the slide would reassert itself and freeze over in the increasing cold, but I kept seeing more and more sidewalk as the salt bit deeper into it.

At last, because there was no sense hanging around in the cold, and because they couldn't stand looking at the slide in its melting disintegration, the gang broke up and left. They yelled a few more ugly threats at the villainous, unknown destroyer of the best slide we'd ever had, then they went away. Joey Pisano went along with them.

I STOOD on the sidewalk alone half a minute, then turned into the store. The shoemaker wasn't at his form—it was nine o'clock and he was eating his breakfast back of his shop—so I didn't see him as I entered the grocery.

"Pa," I said, "some guy or woman—some louse—ruined our wonderful slide!"

"What's that?" said my father. He was in the rear of the store unpacking a case of canned peas.

"Pa, someone ruined the best slide we ever had! If we ever find him—"

Then I stopped. My eyes had caught sight of a one-pound box of salt with the top freshly torn off. It was half hidden behind some bottles of vinegar on a lower shelf near the counter. I turned hot, then cold. No, that's wrong—I just turned numb inside, thinking of what the gang would say or do if they knew who had wrecked the slide.

I worked in the store all day, hardly speaking a word to anybody. I swept the floor, waited on the trade, and delivered a few orders. Usually Saturdays were a little busier than weekdays, but they never were very rushing and this Saturday was no exception. In the afternoon my father began stealing

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glances at me when he thought I wasn't watching. There was a hurt, defensive look in his eyes.

"I don't care," I told myself. "I'll never speak to him as long as I live."

At six o'clock I got ready to go home and eat. My father coughed softly.

"What's the matter, Dave? What's the matter with you today?" He looked at me a while and when I didn't answer he exploded. "All right, tell your friends! Why don't you go ahead and tell them?"

There were no customers in the store. The canned goods on the shelves were grinning under the big lighted gas lamp, like rows of shining teeth.

"Sure, I spoiled your slide!" my father cried. "But I had a good reason for doing it, didn't I?"

I found my voice. "Why?" I shouted, the tears coming to my eyes. "What made you do it?"

My father's face was beet-red by this time; his neck over his collar was red, too. He whirled and pointed next door. "That shoemaker there, that old bachelor, what does he know about the cost of raising a family? He eats like a dog and lives like a dog. You hear?"

"What's he got to do with it? He's generous! He's a nice old man!"

"Sure, he gave you money. *Thirty cents.* But while you boys were sliding you wore out over five dollars worth of shoe leather. Just wait until I and the other parents bring your shoes to him to be fixed! Will he repair them free?"

I was stunned. I couldn't believe Mr. Schneider would figure out a thing like that.

"You're surprised, eh?" my father taunted me. "Why do you think he encourages the boys of the neighborhood to play ball on the street during the summertime? And why does he get sore when some of them go barefoot when it's hot?"

"I didn't know, Pa," I said lamely. "I never knew he'd do a thing like that."

My father said nothing for a while. I saw the red go slowly from his face and from his neck.

"I'm sorry," I said again. "I'm—"

"That's all right," he said dully, after a while. "It's not important. There's other things to worry about." He stared out upon Lake Street where a few wagons were moving darkly along in the cold. "Dave, I don't know how much longer we'll be here. The neighborhood is getting played out. I'm going to look for another store farther west, maybe as far out as Kedzie Avenue."

I shifted from foot to foot, not knowing what to say. I could hear the big clock ticking against the wall. Outside two more wagons rolled by.

"You can go home and eat now," my father told me. "Take an apple from the barrel, a small red one. The wholesaler says they're the sweetest."

Walking home under the El in the dark, my hands cold, I nibbled my apple. The wholesaler was right, the small red ones were the sweetest. But as I went up Lake Street I wasn't thinking of the winey taste on my lips, nor of Mr. Schneider, nor of the slide. I was thinking of my father.

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CAN THERE BE JUDAISM WITHOUT REVELATION?

Israel's Relation to the Divine Is Central

EMIL L. FACKENHEIM

"NOW Mt. Sinai was altogether on smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly . . . and the Lord descended upon Mt. Sinai. . . ." (Exodus 19:18-20)

The Bible reader who comes upon this passage cannot but feel its majesty. His imagination is fired, he is prepared for what is perhaps the greatest chapter in the Bible: the Ten Commandments. Indeed, it is not likely that he will give much thought to these lines, eager as he is to pass on to the Decalogue itself. Perhaps this is fortunate: the curious reader who does pause to reflect is no longer able to pass on so quickly—or even to pass on at all. For what is asserted here baffles the understanding. We are told of a revelation, of a real incursion of eternity into time, God into history.

Now there is no obvious reason why anyone should implicitly accept, as a fact, that a revelation did actually occur, or that such a thing is possible. There are even serious and obvious reasons against it. But it is, conceivably, no wasted effort to find out whether we can comprehend what so hallowed a text clearly asserts; such an effort might be useful even if it should end in failure.

THE assertion itself is simple: God "descends" in order to make manifest to man either His nature or His will.

But it is one thing to state the assertion, and quite another to understand it. How can God "descend"? If—as is commonly held in Jewish tradition—His being is in eternity, He cannot descend, at least not in the sense of being transmuted into time, for if He did, He would cease to be God. Fittingly the Midrash comments: "One might think that the Glory actually descended from Heaven, and was transferred to Mount Sinai; but Scripture says: 'I have talked with you from Heaven.'" The Midrash thus makes God use the heavens as intermediaries; but this is a poetic way of stating the difficulty, rather than a solution.

But if God cannot cease to be eternal, perhaps time can cease to be temporal? Perhaps in revelation a moment of time is transmuted into eternity? Again this is impossible. In the Biblical act of revelation God descends *into* time; far from destroying time, revelation serves to make it meaningful even in the sight of eternity. What are the Ten Commandments if not commandments designed for time, for fulfilment within history? If revelation changed time into eternity, it would not be revelation but the Messianic "end of days."

THAT there has been over the past decade a revival of religiosity, would seem to be beyond dispute. That it has really been a revival of religion, is less certain. For it is not to be denied that there has been much, in this upsurge, of the sentimental, the nostalgic, the merely aesthetic. The core of religion, the revelation of the divine—the central question as to whether the religious experience is an autointoxicating monologue or really a dialogue between God and man—this has hardly as yet been faced up to. And if it is indeed a dialogue, what is distinctive about the Jewish experience as against others? Here, EMIL L. FACKENHEIM explores this problem, in an attempt to discover whether the idea of revelation can be made sense of, or whether it is but an irrational relic of a world passed by. Mr. Fackenheim, who is lecturer in philosophy at the University of Toronto, was ordained a rabbi in Berlin in 1939. His most recent article in COMMENTARY was "The Modern Jew's Path to God" in the May 1950 issue.

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Time, then, must remain temporal, and eternity, eternal; how is it possible that the two should meet?

Perhaps if, in our ignorance of how God could possibly reveal himself, we could at least understand how it is possible for a man to receive a revelation, we might be satisfied. It turns out, however, that here too we are confronted with difficulties which seem insuperable. These may be stated in the form of a dilemma: either revelation discloses what man may discover by means lying within his own powers—but then it is superfluous; or else it discloses what lies beyond human means of discovery—but then it would seem to lie beyond human comprehension too, and the recipient of a revelation could not understand it. Revelation is apparently either superfluous or senseless; either we know the will of God by our own ability, potentially if not actually —in which case we require only a philosopher such as Socrates but not a prophet; or else we are unable to learn it, even through the mouth of a prophet.

And here, it would seem, the whole matter must be left; from every angle revelation appears unintelligible.

To be sure, it is always possible to resort to equivocations. For example, we might speak of revelation as if it were something akin to poetic inspiration. But let us not be deceived. Poetic inspiration is not supernatural; it is the natural product of man, and a product of God only in the sense in which every natural event may be so. To liken revelation to poetry is to make it something which it is not—that is to say, to admit defeat in facing the question of supernatural revelation.

THERE is nothing wrong with an admission of defeat, provided it is frank and unequivocal. It is the mark of wisdom, not ineptitude, to admit one's helplessness in the face of the unintelligible. We might put an end to the whole matter by concluding that revelation in principle is impossible, and that wherever the Bible asserts it, it cannot be taken seriously. In which case the question of the actual occurrence of a revelation, on Mt. Sinai or anywhere else, would not even arise.

The 20th century is inclined toward this view not only by the difficulties inherent in the Biblical doctrine but also by our whole modern outlook. The modern historian has applied himself successfully to what may be termed the naturalization of Biblical history. A historian such as Graetz, writing more than seventy-five years ago, still insists that the events at Mt. Sinai are unique, inexplicable in terms of natural causes; yet even he shows distinct traces of the modern outlook. He refers to the revelation at Mt. Sinai as an "overwhelming experience"—an ambiguous expression. More significantly, he speaks of a "discovery of conscience" at Sinai; but a discovery is made by man, not given by God. Most significant perhaps is his comment on another supernatural event, the division of the Red Sea—"an escape which they [i.e. the Israelites] were forced to regard as a miracle." The task of the new historian, then, became not to record supernatural events, but to explain them away plausibly.

DEVELOPMENTS in the writing of history since Graetz demonstrate the fruitfulness of the new method. Such a work as Salo Baron's *Social and Religious History of the Jews* wishes to leave the reader in no doubt that the evolution of the Mosaic religion is as natural a phenomenon as any other the historian may treat. This approach undermines what for a brief time was the last—and very weak—stronghold of the faithful: the supposed qualitative uniqueness and novelty of the ideas expressed in the Jewish religion, which, it was argued, required a supernatural explanation. The Mosaic religion has been shown to have emerged harmoniously and naturally from previous religions, and its novel aspects have been explained as the result of physical and political forces, or the genius of the man Moses.

The modern historian has thus shown that historical facts can be explained without the

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hypothesis of revelation. He has, moreover, also explained why Biblical man resorted to such a hypothesis: belief in supernatural agencies was quite common in an era which knew or cared little about natural causation, or was even unaware of the concept. Add to this what psychology teaches about dreams, visions, and the like, and the explanation of the Biblical belief in revelation is complete.

In short, the logical problems make it difficult for us to take revelation seriously, and the modern genetic-evolutionary explanation of religious history absolves us of the duty to do so. Which is the reason why, in modern Jewish theology, the concept of revelation lies dead and buried.

But perhaps revelation has been buried prematurely, after all. It is possible that this burial proves, not the demise of the interred, but an indecent haste on the part of the undertakers.

If the modern historian believes himself to have refuted the possibility of revelation, this belief is doubtless fostered by what he has done to one particular account of revelation: the Orthodox account. This he has refuted, at least in principle. "Judaism," wrote the late Joseph H. Hertz, Chief Rabbi of Great Britain, "stands and falls with its belief in the historic actuality of the Revelation at Sinai." True to Orthodox tradition, the rabbi regards revelation as a source of information concerning empirical facts; a view which implies that these facts are to be exempted from critical examination. The critical historian rejects this demand as running counter to all scientific method. He has already proven that much supposedly Sinaitic material is of different origin, and quite possibly he will prove one day that Israel never was at Sinai. Hence a battle ensues, and—in view of the achievements of Biblical criticism and archeological research—there is no doubt as to who will be the eventual victor. Orthodoxy escapes an immediate rout only to the extent that the relevant facts are sufficiently remote in history to elude precise verification.

Has modern rationalism, in its refutation of Orthodoxy, also refuted the entire Jewish tradition? For it is a fact that revelation is accepted by this tradition. Moreover, it is a central doctrine: the Mishnah considers the denial of *Torah min hashamayim* ("Torah from Heaven") so serious an offence as to deny the one who commits it a share in the world to come. If we wish, we may explain this insistence as a mere tactical device, designed as a prop for the tradition itself; but if we do this, we take a low view indeed of Talmudic Judaism. No religion of integrity regards its central doctrines as mere useful fictions, and it is difficult to picture a man suffering martyrdom for the sake of an illusion created by himself for his own benefit.

Was the traditional insistence on revelation perhaps the result of a lack of sophistication about natural causation, as in the Bible itself? It does not appear so. Judah Halevi writes: "Moses held direct communication with God . . . his words were not creations of his own mind. . . . He had not seen a vision in his sleep; nor had someone spoken with him between sleeping and waking, so that he only heard the words in fancy, but not with his ears, so that he saw a phantom, and afterwards pretended that God had spoken with him." Halevi is not a primitive believer in miracles, unaware of natural causation: he fully faces the contemporary doctrine of natural causation, and maintains supernatural revelation in spite of it. Even more impressive is the case of Maimonides. Supreme Jewish rationalist of the Middle Ages, he rejects any unnecessary recourse to the supernatural. Yet the chief theme of his *Guide for the Perplexed* is a defense of the world's creation which he regards as a "fundamental principle of the Torah . . . next in importance to the principle of God's unity"; and he takes this view because, to him, only if the world has been created is revelation possible. Even in post-Enlightenment Jewish theology, from Moses Mendelssohn on, the doctrine of revelation survives, albeit precariously. But with the decline in the quality of theological think-

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ing, there is little effort to meet head on the challenge of the modern outlook, and the modern reassertions of revelation sound often like mere pious repetitions; nevertheless, even as such they reflect an uneasy, though ill-defined, reluctance to surrender the concept to the triumphant anti-supernaturalism of the age.

At least in one respect this uneasiness is justified: if revelation must go, with it must go any possible *religious* justification for the existence of the Jewish people. In the absence of a binding commandment supernaturally revealed to a particular people, it makes as little sense to have a Mosaic religion for the Jewish people today, as, say, a Platonic religion for the modern Greek nation. A person is a Platonist because he accepts the truth of Platonism, not the authority of its author—much less because he shares his national origin. The truth of Platonism, if true it is, is universal; whether one wishes to be a Platonist or not is a matter of individual choice. Similarly, the values of Judaism, if valid, are universally so; Judaism becomes a matter merely of rational individual subscription to a particular doctrine or school of thought, and any religious basis for the existence of the Jewish people lies in shambles.

To be sure, it is always possible to seek refuge from this dilemma in evasive rhetoric. So, in these days of strong Jewish feeling, much is heard about "Jewish values" created by the "religious genius" of our forefathers; to these, it is asserted, modern Jews have a unique obligation. This is no doubt an attempt to save Jewish religious particularism on non-supernatural grounds; but it succeeds only at the cost of moral and religious ruin. There are no more "Jewish" than German or Russian values, or, for that matter, Communist or capitalist. Values are universal and are either valid or invalid; and their source is significant only to the historian, not to the people who live by them. To assert a special Jewish obligation to special Jewish values is to subscribe, wittingly or unwittingly, to a doctrine vicious in its implications. An outgrowth of modern nationalism, it exalts the particularity of national or cultural expression at the expense of the universalism that values inherently require. If we Jews have indeed produced religious genius, we have given it, long ago, to the world; we cannot and dare not keep its insights to ourselves. We try in vain to save Jewish religious particularism on non-supernatural grounds; in the end, we are led to a perversion of classical Jewish doctrine: the substitution, for the worship of God, of the worship of the "Jewish vision" of God.

Moreover, the uniqueness of Jewish genius is a fiction. How can it be maintained in the face of modern scholarship? We cannot have it both ways: either Judaism is unique as a divine revelation to the Jewish people, or Judaism emerges as gradually evolving from, and in interpenetration with, surrounding cultures, making its contribution, no doubt, but a contribution which has, at least in good part, been absorbed by non-Jews. We Jews are not alone in erecting fictions to escape this dilemma. Certain liberal Protestant theologians, having abandoned Christian supernaturalism, nevertheless find early Christianity unique on natural evidence, i.e., its moral superiority over contemporaneous Judaism; this superiority, needless to say, is wholly fictitious.

If, then, revelation is impossible for all the reasons mentioned, only one religion remains tenable in the end: the religion of humanity, expressed in what one might call a "bible of mankind," a compendium of what is best in world literature and art. There are, indeed, important thinkers who have come to exactly this conclusion. But our situation would be quite different should we be able to save the principle of revelation after all. Should there be a direct interference of God with time, it would not only be possible but necessary that this act address itself, not to mankind in general—an abstraction—but to concrete individuals and peoples. All of which leads to the inescapable conclusion that Judaism stands or

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falls, if not—as Rabbi Hertz maintains—with the revelation at Sinai, then at least with the possibility of revelation in principle.

But it is, of course, possible that Judaism falls rather than stands, and that more than two thousand years of Jewish existence were lived by a fundamental illusion. Hence we must, with unremitting insistence, return to our original question: is revelation possible? Can there be a direct incursion of God into history?

THE question is: "Is revelation possible?" But wherever we may have to look for an answer, it *cannot* be in science or metaphysics.

Science deals with empirical facts, in categories which exclude the miraculous. But revelation is miraculous by definition and thus cannot be an empirical fact. If there is to be such a thing as revelation, it will have to take place, not in time, but in the timeless moment in which eternity passes into time. That which has already happened in time is empirical fact, and this comes under the scrutiny of the scientist. But what has not, or not yet, taken on a temporal extension is outside scientific proof as well as refutation. Hence revelation is by its very nature impossible within the framework of science; and whether it is possible outside that framework, science is unable to decide. Any attempt to do so is doomed from the start.

Metaphysical attempts are similarly doomed. The area of metaphysics, while not necessarily empirical, is yet rational; but the miraculous, if it exists, is extra-rational. Hence if the metaphysician discovers that revelation is rationally impossible, because paradoxical, he only discovers what revelation by definition implies; and if he discovers that it is rationally possible he has discovered not revelation, but something else.

But are not then all our difficulties removed? If science and metaphysics remain neutral in the matter of revelation, what is to prevent us from accepting it simply on faith? Indeed, why worry about its *possibility*, instead of accepting, without further ado, the *actuality*, say, of the historic revelations of Judaism? There are those who are prepared to make such a gesture of acceptance. But there are surely many more for whom such an act adds up to a defense of sheer, blind faith, unmitigated in its blindness by any sort of rational argument, and therefore intolerable.

The truth is that by defining the province of science and metaphysics we have merely cleared the path to the crucial difficulty. Within the categories of the empirical and the rational, reality is too restricted to have room for the miracle of revelation; but with these restrictions removed, it is so wide as to make revelation meaningless—it becomes a wholly unintelligible break into time occurring at the most sublime or most ridiculous moments, which could be the message of God or the devil, or simply a manifestation of the unintelligible. As a wholly unintelligible break into time, revelation would not add one whit of meaning to the time it invades. Indeed, it might destroy such meaning as time possesses when taken in itself; for there would be no reason why revelations should not invade time constantly and anywhere. Formerly, the supernatural seemed to elude us; now, by a swift and somewhat ludicrous reversal, it is the natural which seems to travel toward dissipation. In other words, through blind faith we are in danger of turning back to primitivism.

This surely raises, of all objections, the most formidable. Science and metaphysics do not refute the principle of revelation, but neither do they seem to offer evidence for it. Why not, then, discard this superfluous and troublesome concept? Ockham said wisely: "Principles ought not to be multiplied beyond necessity."

Is the concept of revelation unnecessary? *Or does it solve a problem otherwise insoluble?* This, and this alone, is the correct way of putting our question. Indeed, it is the proper question to ask of any doctrine of faith. For religious faith is neither knowledge nor superstition: not knowledge, because its evidence is subjective and outside

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public proof; not superstition, because it is outside refutation as well as proof, and because it is not arbitrary. *Faith may be defined as the sole positive answer to questions of ultimate importance, the asking of which is still reason's prerogative but which reason is no longer able to answer.* Questions that reason can answer as well as ask belong to knowledge; statements that are not answers to intelligible questions are superstitions, both arbitrary and meaningless.

Is revelation the solution of a problem implicit in existence, and otherwise insoluble? Unless we can answer this question affirmatively we shall be compelled to discard the concept of revelation as useless and devoid of meaning.

"THE world and the fullness thereof," says Rabbi Banayah in the Midrash, "were created only for the sake of the Torah." Even after maximum allowance is made for rhetorical extravagance, this statement can only mean: man's existence is incomplete without revelation. Such, indeed, is the consistent traditional teaching. Largely ignoring the physical universe, Jewish tradition is chiefly concerned with the existence of man; this it views in terms of a history moving on from Creation to the Messianic "end of days"; and the crucial events within that history are a succession of revelations. But creation and redemption are themselves doctrines of faith; hence one must first consider, however briefly, their function; only then can Rabbi Banayah's statement become intelligible.

Creation and redemption are doctrines designed to solve the riddle of human existence. For man is a riddle unto himself; the core of the riddle lies in his apparent participation in two worlds, that of nature and spirit. Like all animals, he is doomed to death; but to realize this is to be able to form a concept of death—and of immortality. Like all animals, he is subject to amoral natural needs; but to judge them amoral is to look to a moral standard. Man appears to be mere nature; but in order to recognize himself as "mere" nature he must be spirit also. Perhaps Rabbi Akiba had the human riddle in mind when he said: "Beloved is man, for he was created in the image of God; but it was by a special love that it was made known to him that he was so created."

Attempts to resolve this riddle appear forever doomed to failure. If man interprets himself as an overgrown animal—different from other animals only in complexity—he finds that his natural urges may fit into this interpretation, but his moral and spiritual nature do not; what his interpretation will not explain is the fact that he is capable of —an interpretation. Yet if he interprets himself as a pure spirit he fares no better: nature in him forever stubbornly refuses to be transcended. Is then man in insoluble contradiction with himself—a "broken vessel"?

History supplies further evidence that this is, indeed, the case. If man were but a complex animal he would have no history. He would realize no meaning beyond what already inheres in his essence as a species. His history would be but quantitative variation—in other words, no history at all. Yet if man were an entirely spiritual being, all that is evil and meaningless in history would be mere temporary accident, and he would, properly speaking, have no history either. As Plato implies, whenever a man achieves the perfection potentially in him he has risen above history. As animal, man would exist in time below history, as spirit, in eternity above it. History itself thus appears intelligible only as a composite of time and eternity, nature and spirit; for it is a domain of meaning, indeed, but of a meaning forever partially frustrated. There is equally much—and equally little—truth in those opposite views of history: the eternal, meaningless recurrence of the Greeks, and the necessary moral progress of the moderns. The one finds too little meaning in history, the other too much; the one tries to reduce history to nature, the other to spirit. Both vainly attempt to resolve the human contradiction as reflected in human history.

Religious faith rests on the conviction that this contradiction is a paradox—either

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insoluble, or else soluble only by virtue of a mystery, to be asserted on faith. Precisely that solution is offered in the doctrine of creation. Says the Zohar: "After all the creatures were made, God said unto them: 'Let us make one more creature in partnership. Each of you shall have a share in him, and I will give him a portion of Myself.'" In contrast with philosophical syntheses, the doctrine of creation holds on to *both* sides of the contradiction, thus making it naturally and rationally insoluble: man has an animal and a divine aspect, the one irreducible to the other. Yet what is naturally irreconcilable is supernaturally reconciled in the mystery of creation.

However, taken by itself, creation raises as many problems as it solves. To make God the author of time and eternity, nature and spirit, light and darkness, good and evil, must mean, if it means anything, that these contradictions are not ultimate. But, as we know them, they do seem ultimate: evil is still evil, and darkness, dark, their divine origin notwithstanding. Hence the idea of creation must be complemented by the idea of redemption: not one, but both sides of the human contradiction will be redeemed, and nothing will be lost. The creator of all is also the redeemer of all.

Creation and redemption thus form a religious solution of the human problem, a problem which reason can state but not solve. God will redeem man, but not by making him either less or more than human; either assertion would make human existence meaningless—a tragic contradiction to no purpose. God redeems man by preserving the contradictory elements that constitute his humanity, yet by transforming them in such a way as to take the sting out of the contradiction.

Creation establishes time and history, redemption consummates them. But it is only revelation that can establish the significance of the *here* and *now* as unique. Revelation is the religious category of existence as such. If revelation is impossible, there is significance only to the human situation in general, even though God is its creator and redeemer. Man may then know a law and a promise, but both remain in strict universality—individual men, and individual historic moments, are universally interchangeable. God may then be related to man in general; he is only indirectly and accidentally related to myself, my people, my historic situation.

But existence is inexorably particular. The moral law to which I am obligated may be universal, but the situation in which I must realize it is unique; indeed, the tension between universal law and concrete realization is part of the essential human contradiction. Israel is a manifestation of mankind, but what makes her Israel is unrepeatable and uninterchangeable. A historic situation exemplifies what history as such is, but it is nevertheless something all its own. If revelation is impossible, the particular in existence is a meaningless weight upon time and history—from creation until redemption. History then has meaning only at its beginning and its end; nothing meaningful goes on within it.

But such a history is in the end no history at all. The Platonic philosopher, having risen beyond time to the contemplation of the universal, may leave the particular a meaningless weight. But what if the particular *is not accidental*? What if, as traditional Judaism asserts, man's temporal aspect is as essential as his eternal one? If this be the truth, we cannot, in the Platonic sense, rise above the particular; and it continues to defy us, even in a world that is God's creation. It requires, not a philosopher speaking in terms of the universal, but someone who can speak in the *here* and *now*, and yet give it absolute meaning—in short, a prophet. If man cannot heal his self-division by ascending from time into eternity, then it can be healed only by God, descending from eternity into time.

A history without God is an unmitigated tragedy—a domain of frustrated meaning. A history which is, as a whole, in the hands of God, but in which revelation is impossible, may be, as a whole, beyond tragedy; but the particular in it, as such, remains a dead and

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sodden weight. A history in which revelation is possible is one in which every event, no matter how trivial and insignificant, may in its stark particularity be lit up with unique meaning; it is a history characterized by the crucial fact that fulfilment is possible *within* history and not only by abolishing history.

In a history in which revelation is impossible, man's ultimate achievement is to wait for redemption. In his moral actions, he is merely an accidental case of the human species, and all his accomplishments are affected by the contradiction inherent in that species. In a history in which revelation is possible the individual is, potentially, singled out; his actions and existence may become a unique fulfilment. To be sure, they cannot become completely redemptive, but neither need they be of a merely repetitive character: they may become unique contributions toward redemption. The Hasidim taught that the deeds of any individual may leave unique traces in the upper world; for a history in which revelation is impossible, such a doctrine would be meaningless.

Revelation is the solution of the religious problem of the here and now. To assert that revelation is possible is to assert faith in the relevance, before God, of this man, at this time, in this place. Only if there is, or at least can be, revelation, does the God of the philosophers become the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

A Hasidic rabbi used to say: "We thank Thee, Source of all Blessing, for being at once revealed and concealed." Revelation at once reveals and conceals. It lights up the particular as such; it must therefore reveal. Yet it remains concealed as well, for if it did not it would dissolve time itself in its glare. Why, the Midrash asks, did God descend in fire? Because revelation is comparable to fire: "If one comes too near it, one gets burned. If one keeps too far from it, one is cold. The only thing for man to do is to seek to warm himself against its fire." Another Midrash puts this perhaps even more profoundly: "On the instant when Israel heard the First Commandment their souls left them. So the Commandment returned to God and said: 'Sovereign of the universe! Thou art life and thy Torah life; yet Thou hast sent me to the dead!' . . . Thereupon God modified the communication so as to make it more palatable. . . ."

Revelation thus remains a mystery even while it is revealed; and every single word spoken by any prophet is inexorably shot through with human interpretation. Franz Rosenzweig observed: "Revelation is not identical with legislation; it is, in itself, nothing but the act of revelation itself. Immediately, it is its own sole content; properly speaking, it is completed with the word *vayyered* ('and He descended'); even *vayyedabber* ('and He spoke') is already human interpretation." This may be a point of extreme subtlety, but theologians ignore it at their peril. Orthodoxy identifies the human —if ancient—interpretation of the revelation with the revelation itself; it is this literalism which lays it open, as we have seen, to fatal attacks. Modernism, too, identifies divine revelation and human interpretation, but commits the opposite error: instead of making the interpretation divine, it makes of revelation a purely human "creation." Hence modernist theology is in the end indistinguishable from a sort of eclectic philosophy, leading a precarious existence by the grace of whatever trends may dominate the age. To this abject condition its present feeble search for props in anthropology, psychiatry, and even quantum physics bears eloquent testimony.

All interpretation of revelation is human; and Orthodoxy errs in its belief that a revelation could be possessed in the form of a body of truths and laws unaffected by human contingencies and hence unchanging in validity. But it would also be an error to depreciate all interpretations because of their human character. Revelation must pass into human interpretation, else it does not become accessible at all. But this gives rise to the question: what is the proper interpretation? Or, if proper interpretations differ with time, circumstance, and perhaps even individual condition, at what point do such inter-

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pretations cease to be legitimate? Or again, to put it more concretely: where does the revelation become the religious law of Judaism? What is that law for the modern Jew? And is there but one such law for him?

RELIGIOUS leaders in Reform and Conservative Judaism have recently given increasing attention to the religious laws and ceremonies of Judaism, and there has been growing concern with the problem of "authority." This present attention to Halachah (Law) reflects a highly creditable appreciation of the problem of the concretely human: Jewish existence, it is realized, loses its specific reality and meaning if it expresses itself religiously only in the moral law, which is, after all, binding for all men. But it is extremely important to realize that this problem cannot be solved by conventions that simply formulate codes of religious practice. It is a useless, more, a dangerous procedure to ask for a code of practice without at the same time inquiring into the foundation and ultimate significance of such practice. If revelation is in principle impossible, all such practices, no matter how "creative" or "inspiring," become in the end indistinguishable from folklore; and attempts to foster them consciously are a brand of nationalism with too many religious incongruities to mention.

Any fruitful theoretical concern with Halachah must be preceded by an affirmation of revelation. In this essay, it has merely been asked whether revelation is possible and what it would mean were it to happen. A religious concern with Jewish living presupposes the assertion that revelation *actually happened,* touching Jewish history at least at one point—for this is all that is needed—and singling it out forever for a special task and destiny. Only then is it possible to interpret that revelation in its challenge and promise. Only then is it possible for the Jew to seek out the positive content of his Jewish existence.

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NEW YORK: 1951

Seven Poems

CHARLES REZNIKOFF

I

"THE lamps are burning in the synagogue,
in the houses of study, in dark alleys. . . ."
This should be the place.
This is the way
the guide book describes it. Excuse me, sir,
can you tell me
where Eli lives, Eli the *katzev*—
slaughterer of cattle and poultry?
One of my ancestors.
Reb Haskel? Reb Shimin? My grandfathers.

This is the discipline that withstood the siege
of every Jew;
these are the prayer shawls that have proved
stronger than armor.

Let us begin then humbly. Not by asking:
Who is This you pray to? Name Him;
define Him. For the answer is:
We do not name Him.
Once out of a savage fear, perhaps;
now out of knowledge—of our ignorance.

Begin then humbly. Not by asking:
Shall I live forever?
Hear again the dear dead greeting me gladly
as they used to
when we were all among the living?
For the answer is:
If you think we differ from all His other creatures,
say only if you like with the Pharisees, our teachers,
those who do not believe in an eternal life
will not have it.

In the morning I arise and match again
my plans against my cash.
I wonder now if the long morning prayers
were an utter waste of an hour
weighing, as they do, hopes and anguish,
and sending the believer out into the street
with the sweet taste of the prayers on his lips.

Today this creditor is at your office;
tomorrow this one in your home;

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until the final creditor of all
places his bony hands upon your breast.
Faster!
Dig your heels into the dust!

How good to stop
and look out upon eternity a while.
And daily—at *Shahris, Minha, Maariv,*
in the morning, afternoon, and evening—
be at ease in Zion.

II

In Memoriam: S.R.

THIS I light for you
will last longer, perhaps,
than if it were on a wick
in a glassful of wax,
than if it were shining wires
and safe in a glass bulb
from any gust of wind.

And you are still here
shining like a star that has
crumbled out of heaven.

III

In Memoriam: L.R.W.

A SHADOW on the bright sidewalk:
death was beside us
showing his pistol.
No!

So skillful have the undertakers become
that when they buried you
they led us straight away from the grave
and did not let us see how deep the coffin lies.
To the savage, perhaps, each bird has a message;
I know that they shriek only to themselves.
The stars in their courses did not fight for us.

IV

I DIED last week, last year.
I know these streets so well, these skies,
yet look about me with a stranger's eyes.

I bring a message from the wind and worms,
from darkness, dust, and stones;
I wear a shroud beneath this suit
but talk of trifles or am mute.

Many, many that I meet

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greet me politely and I greet them, too;
but, once behind,
out of sight, out of mind.

I have no word of blame, no stick or stone,
because I died. The fault, the weakness,
was mine, of course. Mine alone.

V

As I was wandering with my unhappy thoughts,
I looked and saw
that I had come into a sunny place,
familiar and yet strange.
"Where am I?" I asked a stranger. "Paradise."
"Can this be Paradise?" I asked surprised,
for there were motor cars and factories.
"It is," he answered. "This is the sun that shone on Adam once;
the very wind that blew upon him, too."

VI

I HAVE neither the time nor the weaving skill, perhaps,
for the intricate medallions the Persians know;
my rugs are the barbaric fire-worshipper's:
how blue the waters flow,
how red the fiery sun,
how brilliant a green the grass is,
how blinding white the snow.

VII

Te Deum

Not because of victories
I sing,
having none,
but for the common sunshine,
the breeze,
the largess of the spring.

Not for victory
but for the day's work done
as well as I was able;
not for a seat upon the dais
but at the common table.

CHARLES REZNIKOFF, poet, novelist, and historian, is a familiar contributor to the pages of COMMENTARY.

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FROM THE AMERICAN SCENE

MY LIFE AS A "JEWISH CHILD GENIUS"

Enrichment in Baltimore

MARGARET BLOCHER ANAVI

MY PARENTS moved around a great deal during my childhood. Every place we lived, my brother and I were sent to Sunday school. If the Baptist church happened to be nearer our home than the Methodist church, we were Baptists. If the Episcopalians maintained a church school nearer yet, we were Episcopalians. Our parents were more interested in maintaining, through us, the family's standing as churchgoers in the community than in the religious instruction we might or might not be receiving. I had, therefore, a most eclectic view of religion in general and no personal opinions or preferences whatever.

A few months after we moved to Baltimore, Maryland, I was transferred out of the regular seventh-grade class in the public school and placed in a group which quickly became known to the rest of the school as the "genius class." We were all children who had broken the thermometer on the Stanford-Binet I.Q. test. Progressive theories in education had permeated the public school system just enough to make school authorities think of the "over-bright child" as a Problem. Our genius class was an attempt to deal with the problem by segregating us from the rest of the school community and giving a special course of instruction, known as an Enrichment Program, designed to cope with our supposedly gigantic mentalities. As it happened, of the forty children assigned to the class on the basis of their I.Q.'s, I was the only Gentile; everyone else was Jewish.

At the time, I had attended some seven different schools in five different states. My experiences with free public education had not been too happy. My schoolmates liked to ask me if I had "swallowed the dictionary," and they disapproved of my complete helplessness at any sort of game. My teachers found me impudent, inattentive, and far too talkative. In the new genius class, everything was different. I found friends who could talk just as fast and just as much as I could—and did! Our teachers thought our questions interesting rather than pert. I loved the work; and I was completely happy for the first time in my school career. There was only one fly in my ointment: I didn't feel I completely belonged to the group because they were all Jewish and I was something called a *goy*. Nobody was mean to me, or even called attention to this unfortunate fact. It was just something about me which everyone knew and was kind enough to ignore—almost.

I TOOK the matter up with my mother while she was darning socks.

"Mother, may I be a Jew?"

My sole source of information about Jews at that time was the Bible in Sunday school, and I don't recall connecting Hebrew and

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AS ALMOST everybody knows, (almost) all Jewish children are geniuses and (almost) all geniuses are Jewish. MARGARET BLOCHER ANAVI tells here of the efforts of one bright little girl from the wrong side of the intellectual tracks to assimilate herself to a genial company. Mrs. Anavi was born in New York City in 1924, and attended New York University and the New School for Social Research. After some years as a social worker and a radio and advertising writer, she is now concentrating on free-lance writing of articles and stories.

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Jew. I asked to become Jewish as I would have asked permission to change to the Sunday school where they served ice cream.

Mother stopped sewing a moment and said, "A what?"

"A Jew. Everybody's a Jew. I've been everything else so I don't see why I can't be a Jew. It's a religion."

"Why?" She began darning again while I explained to her as best I could. She nodded and said:

"Very well. Be whatever you want to be."

The next day in school, I said to a few of my best friends: "I'm a Jew too. I didn't know about it before because my parents didn't tell me. Now you'll have to explain what you mean when you say things in Jewish and tell me what's Jewish."

The explanation was accepted calmly. My fellow students had never cared particularly what I was; my feelings of being left out were largely self-created. It made a great difference to me, however, and I applied myself to aping my friends in every possible way.

As a Protestant, white, fairly well-to-do child, I had always enjoyed a privileged position in society, even if I didn't know it. Even as an abstract concept, I found discrimination difficult to understand. I was a direct descendant of the gods and expected everyone to understand it and behave accordingly.

One afternoon I stayed after school to wash the blackboards for a favored teacher. She thanked me and added that my hair looked nice tied back with a ribbon and that I should always wear it that way.

"No one would guess you were Jewish; you don't look it," she said with the air of one who pays a compliment.

"What does Jewish look like?" I asked. If she'd told me I looked or didn't look like a panda or a Hottentot the question would have been the same.

"Well—" she answered in some confusion, "your nose isn't noticeable and you're a blonde. . . ." Her voice trailed off and then she suggested briskly that I'd better be going home as it was getting late.

But I thought I had grasped her description of Jewish. A Prussian ancestor had gifted me with a perfectly straight nose and a lot of it. My mother told me firmly, and often, that my nose was aristocratic. Who was I to argue? My best friend, Leona Silberstein, was also a blonde with a straight nose. It was several months, therefore, before I discovered that what people called a typically Jewish appearance did not necessarily include blond hair and a long, straight (according to my mother, aristocratic) nose.

Our class was asked to collect money for the Red Cross. The project was presented to us as worthy of our best efforts. With the enthusiasm that was typical of us as a group, we worked hard for several months and managed to raise about two hundred dollars. Most of it was earned money, not donations from our parents. I was on the committee that took the money to the Hygiene teacher who was in charge of collections. This teacher, an elderly and kindly person, made quite a fuss over the amount and we all stood around grinning delightedly and feeling pretty good about it.

"Yes indeed," she remarked, "it certainly takes you children to raise money all right."

That was all she said, but by some telepathy I knew she meant Jewish children might be expected to excel in money-raising activities. There was something wrong with that picture somewhere, but I couldn't quite put my finger on it. The incident retired into the filing cabinet I used for a mind and rested there beside my nose that "wasn't noticeable."

A girl whom I had known slightly before I was placed in the genius class asked to see my first report card of the term. We were in the locker room and I put my books down obligingly and handed over the card. As usual, my Handwriting, Spelling, and Arithmetic had failed to meet minimum requirements and the Gymnasium teacher wasn't too happy with me either. I accepted these deficiencies philosophically. I seldom brought home a straight "A" report card. The girl looked at my averages and sniffed.

"I got an 'A' in everything and you're in the genius class. What's so smart about you? I guess my mother's right; you have to be a Yid to be smart around here."

On the lesser breed outside the law I never wasted time. I was in the special class and she was not. This I pointed out while I spilled ink all over her books. She attempted retaliation, but if I wasn't good in gym, I could run.

Minor incidents, chance remarks, even

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sidelong looks, began to accumulate in the filing cabinet one after the other. I didn't think about these things, exactly; I just got a peculiar baffled feeling, tinged with anger, at some of the things people said. Ordinarily I should have discussed this with my parents, who were very good at explaining practically anything. I never did mention it because I overheard my mother say to my father:

"This experience is doing Margaret a lot of good, Ralph. I'm glad she's in this class—only I wish she wouldn't pick up that Jewish accent."

My mother hadn't objected, in my hearing, to my ear-cracking Midwestern *r*, picked up the year before. She had accepted the flat New England speech the year before that. As for this so-called Jewish accent, it consisted mostly of saying "hanking" for "hanging" and paying a bit more attention to diction and enunciation than the Southern norm required. When I heard her say this to my father I got that baffled feeling and decided, on some half-conscious level, not to discuss the matter with them.

MY SCHOOLMATES were busy, unusually happy children for the most part. They had the same attitude toward anti-Semitism that I had toward Spelling. Nothing could be done about it so why worry? The only reason it bothered me, I suppose, was the privileged position I had occupied for the previous twelve years. I wasn't used to it. Besides, my new friends were very valuable to me and I resented any criticism of them.

As a group, a lot more trouble was caused us by our being considered geniuses than we ever had out of being Jewish. The rest of the children resented us, envied us, or paid us exaggerated respect. Regardless of which attitude, they wanted no part of us. In the schoolyard and on the way home we were forced to associate with each other exclusively.

Our teachers alternated between wild enthusiasm and openly expressed disapproval. They rejoiced in the opportunity to teach bright children and were bitterly disappointed to discover that most of us possessed highly specialized minds. Benson Sonnheim, for example, read textbooks in chemistry and math the way other children read comic books. He could not write a decent sentence, however, and made the English teacher wonder aloud how *he* ever got into the Enrichment Program. The Arithmetic teacher wondered aloud how *I* ever got into the Enrichment Program and devoted her time and energies to more rewarding pupils like Benson. That was fine with me; I'd been looking for a math teacher who would ignore me for years.

None of us was the least bit of use with our hands. The Manual Training teacher, for the boys, and the Sewing teacher, for the girls, despaired of us. They struck up quite a romance while agreeing together in the lunchroom that the genius class was composed mostly of half-wits.

As so few of us were all-around geniuses, we found ourselves living in a continual atmosphere of disapproval. Each of our teachers, selected on the basis of previous excellence, felt it an honor to be assigned our class. They all wanted to show results in the form of superior work and loaded us down with homework. In every subject we were supposed to have a Project and the Project was supposed to enrich us. A Project would be an original play, written, produced, and acted by us, illustrating what we were learning in History, for example. We loved our Projects and worked on them furiously. Only there were so many of them! Nor was every child able to enter into every Project. To this day I don't know what the math Project was supposed to be. It had something to do with a notebook, but Benson made me my notebook in return for a few English compositions I wrote for him. I daresay Benson couldn't tell anyone today that the English Project was in the form of biographical essays. Meat and drink for me —impossible for him.

After a few months of Enrichment we found ourselves doing four hours of homework a night, living in isolation from the rest of the school, and suffering from a general sense of inadequacy to the demands being made upon us. The tension and competition among our teachers affected us, as did the exclusive company of our high-powered selves. We were edgy, tired, irritable.

Benson Sonnheim, for whom I had a special affection, socked Teddy Field during recess one day. Teddy socked back and the two boys rolled around on the grass pum-

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meling each other. The fight was over nothing; it really represented overwrought nerves after a particularly harrowing morning during which we had been scolded by three teachers in a row. Miss Harrison, a popular and youthful teacher of Music, broke up the fight and said severely: "I'm surprised to find *you* children fighting!"

Prompted by who knows what combination of irritations, I suddenly drew back my foot and kicked the agreeable Miss Harrison on her shin. It was quite a kick, and my friends looked at me aghast. So did Miss Harrison, rubbing her shin and too amazed to speak.

"Jews can fight!" I said, grimly.

"Wh-a-a-a-t!" The look on the teacher's face was too completely thunderstruck to be misunderstood. The idea of Jewishness had never entered her mind.

"See here, young lady," she began in justifiable wrath, "you people are entirely too sensitive. What do you mean by kicking me? It's people like you who make trouble for yourselves—" etc., etc.

I stood under her tongue-lashing and felt utterly mixed up. Black anger, shame, embarrassment, a stubborn idea that I was more sinned against than sinning, boiled around inside of me and squeezed helpless tears from my eyes. Worst of all, the little crowd around me stepped back a few feet. They weren't deserting me, but my behavior did not meet with their approval.

I burst out with a tearful harangue to the effect that we had too much homework and none of our teachers were fair—all because we were Jewish! Miss Harrison's face became less angry and she took me by the arm and said, quietly, "I think we'd better pay a little visit to the Principal's office, Margaret."

MRS. GIBSON, our Principal, had instigated and shepherded the Enrichment Program from its inception. She was an intelligent, patient old lady, and she listened to Miss Harrison's truthful and complete version of the schoolyard crisis without comment.

"Sit down, Margaret," she told me coldly. I was not afraid of Mrs. Gibson, but I was considerably sobered.

She took Miss Harrison into her private office and talked to her a few moments in a low tone. The teacher came out, smiled kindly at me, and left. Mrs. Gibson's voice summoned me to her desk. I stood looking at her unhappily while she looked back at me with an amused expression.

"Margaret," she began, "are you—"

I knew—and this time I was absolutely certain—that she was about to ask me if I was Jewish. Something in my face told her to stop, perhaps. In any event she began again.

"I'd like to ask you why you feel your teachers are unfair. And why you think you have too much homework."

I answered her by showing her my notebook, which had remained clutched in my hand throughout the entire affair. In it were listed my homework assignments for the past few weeks. I told her, laying it on a bit thick, how long it took me to do each assignment. I also told her about the way the teachers had been scolding us for not all being smart in every single subject.

She nodded when I was finished and handed my notebook back to me.

"You may go back to your class now," she said. "And Margaret—if you ever kick a teacher in this school again, I shall be forced to expel you. Is that clear?"

"Yes Ma'am," I said politely, and prepared to leave. She called me back and began to question me again, looking at a pencil in her hand while she talked, instead of at me.

"Do you feel that some of your teachers are—unreasonably unfair? That they don't really want to teach you?"

I had a hunch she was asking me if any of our teachers didn't like teaching Jewish children exclusively. There were two who had made it pretty clear that they disliked each and every one of us. One of them was the Sewing teacher, but she had pretty good reasons; we couldn't learn to sew. The other was the History teacher.

I had no way of telling Mrs. Gibson in so many words that our History teacher was an anti-Semite. I stumbled around for a while, trying to tell the truth and make myself clear. Mrs. Gibson was a fine woman with a lot of experience with children. She cut me short and sent me back to class.

MY PUNISHMENT was waiting for me. My classmates, especially the important Benson, made it clear that they found me a pain in the neck. My behavior was

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described in most unflattering terms to those students who had not been present at the infamous kick. I had been criticized before by people my own age, but this was the first licking I took from people I liked. The whole incident has remained fresh in my mind because I thought about it so much at the time. I was willing to admit I was wrong—but just where and how? At what point does one get angry and how may that anger be legitimately expressed? I was still unwilling to discuss it at home.

Benson solved my problem, at least partly, within a few days. He would have none of me for a while, and then he came to my desk before school started and asked me to draft a petition. It seemed some of the boys had been talking it over and decided to draw up a statement concerning homework which we would all sign and which would be presented to Mrs. Gibson.

I eagerly drafted the petition and experienced the first agonies of outraged authorship when the informal committee in charge of petitions rewrote everything I'd done. I disagreed with them loudly and took overruling with very poor grace. Benson lectured me some more and I daresay it all did me a great deal of good and I began to learn about Democracy and the Rule of the Majority and all that sort of thing. At least I've never kicked anyone since. But I still don't like to have my copy rewritten.

The effect of the petition was a visit from the Principal. She told us that teachers were to agree on homework assignments before they were given to us in the future. Two hours' work at home were to be considered sufficient and we were to feel free to protest if overloaded.

Another change was made in the Enrichment Program after that. Several of the pupils who had not been doing well were dropped from the class and others added from the general school. None of the newcomers was Jewish. The change made no difference to us at all. The students who were dropped were the kind who had never quite fitted in and the new ones were our kind of people. The unity of the group was heightened by the additions. In a short time about a third of us were Gentile. After this period I have no memory of any anti-Semitism. Either it died out or I no longer felt it.

Oh yes, one other change—we got a new History teacher.

I have often wondered, in the years since I was enriched by the Baltimore public school system, just how much native intelligence accounted for the brightness of myself and my fellows? In the culture neither of Brahmin New England nor of intellectual Jewry is a boy condemned because he likes to read books more than he likes to play baseball, or a girl valued only for her looks. My friends and myself all came from homes where parents respected and encouraged intellectual ability. (How unfair, actually, to give us a special program when our whole lives at home were a special program! The children who really needed and would have profited from such a program were just the ones excluded or dropped out.)

STILL, despite this common emphasis on things of the mind, there were significant differences between a New England and a Jewish background. I recall saying plaintively to my mother: "Please Mother—no bacon and tomato sandwiches when I bring Leona home tomorrow!" Many of my friends' families had become kosher as a reaction to what was going on in Europe at the time. They took their food laws pretty seriously and their children were filled with the new regime. Others had always been kosher. My familiarity with "kosher" was to come in handy for the family.

My mother gave a party for some of my father's salesmen and their wives. Nobody ate much of anything, and my mother was deeply offended. While she was discussing this with my father, I broke in to say briefly: "Not kosher."

"I never thought of that!" my mother said, amazed.

She gave me her full and flattering attention while I instructed her. Our next party was quite a success and my mother was gratified to note that *everything* got eaten. We developed a passion for lox ourselves about this time, and my mother complained she could never keep any on hand because we all ate it so fast and in such quantity. Leona's mother, on the other hand, asked me to ask my mother for the recipe for apple pan dowdy, which Leona had mentioned favorably after eating it at our house.

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Leona introduced me to a way of life I had never imagined. My own family were chips off the rock-bound coast of New England. I grew up on such maxims as: "Praise to the face is open disgrace," or "Fools' names and faces are always found in public places." I was expected to obey my parents without question and on the instant. They loved me, and I knew it, but they didn't praise me or pet me very often.

The first time I had dinner at Leona's house I couldn't eat for surprise. Her father smacked his lips after he ate his soup. What awful table manners! I was embarrassed for Leona. Her grandmother asked me what my father did for a living. "Personal questions are not asked by ladies and gentlemen of other ladies and gentlemen." I misunderstood the old lady's kindly interest and sat in shocked silence. In other children's homes I had met unfamiliar behavior, but no other children had been valued and respected friends. The home itself was very like my own, too. At twelve, one does not notice furniture so much as one does a general atmosphere. I could not say what curtains Mrs. Silberstein had at the windows, but I knew this was a home equal to my own in every respect. It felt familiar to me as no other strange home did. There were pictures on the walls, and bookshelves, and other things which seemed right and normal to me.

But Mr. Silberstein smacked his lips!

And Leona's grandmother asked me what my father did for a living!

I was completely at sea and could only pick at my dinner. Then Mrs. Silberstein and her mother-in-law engaged in an acrimonious discussion of the salt in the meat.

"Well, you have no taste in your mouth," one of them said, and I couldn't believe my ears. If one of my grandmothers had been spoken to like that, and in that tone of voice, there would have been no further conversation between the two parties to the argument for the next several years. Yet both women appeared to have forgotten about it within a few minutes.

After dinner Mr. Silberstein pushed back his chair and suggested we all go to the movies. My parents did not approve of movies for children and I had only been taken to about four during my entire life. All four had been highly educational. I assumed Leona and I would be left home and was overjoyed to discover that we were both included. What a wild free life! Movies—just like that!

Some months later Leona showed me some folders from a summer camp. It seemed she was to select the one to which she wished to be sent. I went to camp myself; but of course my parents decided upon the camp and my opinions were not asked.

When Leona wanted extra pocket money for some reason, she had only to ask. Usually she got it. My parents gave me an allowance and would have been deeply shocked if I had asked for more.

For a while I envied Leona passionately. There was in my friend's home an open affection, an ability to handle emotion, which was lacking in my own background. When you got mad you didn't have to kick teachers and when you liked people you weren't afraid to say so. It seemed to me that Leona's folks loved her more than mine did me; and what's more, they seemed to love *me* more than mine. They made such a fuss over me during every visit that I hated to leave. But after a while, I realized that my parents seemed somewhat attractive to Leona. She liked the way my mother laid down certain rules and left me alone within those rules. She liked the consistency of our household, where disciplinary action assumed the pattern of a navy court martial: everybody knew the rules and everybody was free to present evidence and argument as to why those rules had been broken. She also said I could "talk" to my mother. She meant that any subject under heaven and earth was worthy of full-dress discussion in my parents' eyes and that children were entitled to adult explanations. In essence, Leona admitted that my parents fussed over me less than hers did, and exacted stricter obedience, but she appeared to think they respected me more.

I STOPPED being a Jew about two-thirty in the afternoon two weeks after my twelfth birthday. The disaster happened in Geography and I still can't think of it without embarrassment.

The teacher was running through some of the questions contained in her syllabus of work for her regular classes. We had covered all of this material some time before, so

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the questions appeared infantile to our mature young minds. She came to a question, began to smile, and said: "Would any of you be able to tell me what Zionism is?"

There was a general giggle. I, inhabited temporarily by some malevolent demon, leaped to my feet and announced confidently: "Zionists are some people who live in Zion City, Illinois, and still think the world is flat!"

The class and the teacher collapsed in hysterics, while I stood there with a particularly stupid expression on my face. Nobody, but nobody would believe I was a Jew after that.

It didn't make any difference, though. Benson and Leona and the others had long ago accepted me as one of themselves—a little erratic perhaps—but definitely one of the gang. That was all I'd ever wanted anyway. If any survivors of Enrichment in Baltimore, *circa* 1935, read this, please accept my thanks for enriching me more than I could ever tell you.

POEM

SAUL TOUSTER

"And do not call it fixity. . . ."—Burnt Norton

SOMEONE has been playing with the spheres
And the sky is left open like a cracked skull
And from the sun magnificent tears
Fall on the earth, final and full.
Parts of the world are dark, parts bright:
    The potsherds bury the light
With jagged edges and the earth-smooth knife
Flashes the absent hands of our still life.
The new world breaks as when old-world began,
And out of the sheer perspective of our years
An arm grows wildly on a dying man.
    Someone has been playing with the spheres.

Somewhere they are playing with the spheres
And every good and perfect gift is lost,
Or rather hidden, and what appears
Is only an aptitude: the cost
Of finding is to praise what might exist:
    Every finding is a tryst
Where *she* steps out of her concealment, new
With love, and shakes her loose black locks above you,
And you must join so that you're severed in a way
That saves you—and though she grieve with pure tears,
She will be radiant, reflecting the whole day.
    Somewhere they are playing with the spheres.

SAUL TOUSTER, whose poem "Time of Year" appeared in the February 1951 issue of COMMENTARY, and who has also been published in *Sewanee Review*, holds a degree from Harvard Law School. He practices law in New York City.

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CEDARS OF LEBANON

THE APOCALYPSE OF GORGORIOS

A Selection from the Literature of the Falashas

THE writings of the Falashas, the "Black Jews" of Ethiopia, strongly reflected the influence of the Ethiopic-Christian environment in which they lived. This description of Heaven and Hell, which forms the first part of the Falasha Apocalypse of Gorgorios, contains elements that can be traced back to the 3rd-century Christian Apocalypse of St. Paul, and is itself a Jewish version of an as yet undiscovered Christian-Ethiopic Apocalypse of the 14th century.

This is the second selection from the writings of the Falashas to appear in the "Cedars of Lebanon." Like the first (the beautiful legend "The Angels Bury Moses," in our last issue), it is reprinted from the *Falasha Anthology*, translated and edited by Wolf Leslau, and just published by Yale University Press as Volume VI of the Yale Judaica Series on the Louis M. Rabinowitz Foundation. The text appears with the publisher's permission.—ED.

BLESSED be God, the Lord of Israel. [This is the book] of the prophet Gorgorios.

I said to the angel Michael: "Tell me about death and how [the soul] goes forth from the body." He said to me: "I shall tell thee how the soul leaves the body," and he said to me: "Death is bitter and painful to the righteous and the sinners as well, but for the man of good deeds it is salvation and rest when soul and body are separated. . . .

"The death of the sinner is desolate. His departure from this ephemeral world is as follows: the angels of calamity who have no mercy, the ill-favored, disfigured, are sent to him. The soul of the sinner is entrusted to them in a terrible punishment. Then the evil spirits who were with him and devoured him come to him. When the man sees them he will repent that he did not accomplish good deeds in his lifetime. More punishment is inflicted upon him, and they raise his soul to Heaven in great pain and sore calamity and smite it with sticks of fire." . . .

Then I saw an old good man who had died, and the angels raised his soul aloft. This soul was as bright as the sun. The angels received it and said joyfully: "O soul, thine affliction passed away because of God's word, and thou wilt find mercy at His side forever." After they had raised this soul to Heaven, all the angels shouted and said: "Praise to God alone, the Holy." And they said to this soul: "Peace and felicity to thee, forever," and they blessed the angel who was with her. Then I heard God's voice saying: "Bring this soul that she may rejoice [and receive] the fruit of her deeds and find her reward." The soul then prostrated herself with fear. The angel said to her: "Fear not, O soul, for thou hast accomplished good deeds before they raised thee. It will be reckoned to thee as righteousness [and thou shalt receive] the treasures of grace full of joy and gladness." I also heard God saying: "Place this soul with the [souls of the] hermits who are secluded and live on the mountains and hills serving God."

Then the angel said to me: "Look." And behold, I saw smoke and sulphur rising from the earth to Heaven, thousands and thousands of spirits disfigured, angels with dark faces from whose mouths burning charcoal came forth and who held sticks of fire in their hands. I saw it and was frightened and said to the angel: "What is this terrifying sight?" He said to me: "[It is for] a bad king who abandoned justice and was iniquitous. And the order came from God to take his soul by force at the hand of bitter Death. And these, the angels of calamity and of wrath, were sent to him." Then I saw a dark

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one whose odor was bad and whose teeth and nails were of fire. As for the soul, she shouted and lamented: "Pity me, pity me." When she shouted they poured upon her burning charcoal from Heaven. When she drew nigh a sheet of fire like a wave of the sea came and hit her and brought her down to earth. Then the angels said: "Let us take her away." And I saw the angels and the spirits raise her as before, and they brought her to Heaven and said: "Bring not in this soul. She is unclean, since she was rebellious against her Creator and chose the earthly kingdom in vain rather than the Heavenly Kingdom and followed the commandments of Satan." Then a voice came from Heaven saying: "Say to this unclean and bad soul that she confess her faults and the sins she has committed." The soul answered, trembling: "I did things in my kingdom which were not proper, without thinking of the future or of the judgment that will overcome me." . . . The angels said to her: "When thou didst walk upon the earth we were gracious to thee there. Hadst thou made thy ways and doings good, thou wouldst have inherited the Heavenly Kingdom, but now thou wilt be rewarded according to thine actions." Then I heard the voice of God saying: "Bring this soul to the rebellious, iniquitous, transgressors, and unclean so that she be there in her punishment until the day of retribution." . . .

THEN the angel Michael said to me: "I have shown thee the departure of the souls of the sinners and of the just. And now follow me and I shall let thee see the place where the good and pure live." Then he held my hand and brought me into a wide place, the charm of which was like a precious pearl of various colors that shines like bright stars and like lamps that ravish the eyes. There were in it thousands of doors of sapphire brighter than the sun. The floor of this place was white as silver and as mirrors. Behold, a large stream and small springs flowing with light, and the stones of this stream were precious pearls, topazes, carbuncles, hyacinths, and emeralds. And around this stream were tall and short trees. It seemed a valley. Among all the trees there was not a dry one nor a fallen-down leaf nor a spoiled fruit. The odor of these trees was sweeter than all the odors upon the earth. When the dead in the graves smell this odor they will wake up and live. That place had no sun nor moon [but its light] exceeded the light of the sun, and the darkness of the night came not near it and found it not. Then I marveled, praised and blessed God. The angel said to me: "Marvel not, O Gorgorios. This is the Paradise in which Adam and Eve lived; in it there is neither odor nor cold nor sadness. If they had not transgressed the commandment of God they would have remained in it, they and their children, without affliction, sorrow, sickness, death, sin, or iniquity. God knew in advance what would happen." I said to Michael: "Who lives in this place?" He said to me: "Those who observe the law of God will stay here." . . .

The angel said to Gorgorios: "Now thou wilt see something that is greater than anything that is on earth and in Heaven. [They are] those who serve God with a pure heart. Who can know God?" I perceived a sound of songs and melodies that rejoiced the heart, praise, hymns, and a light that appeared like lightning, and a fragrance that revived the dead. Then I turned back and behold [there was] a woman dressed in purple and no eye could look at her because of her splendor. I marveled, praised God, then fled and knew not where I was. And when my mind was restored I said to the angel: "What is this marvel?" And he said to me: "This is the Heavenly Jerusalem." I said to the angel: "For whom is it prepared?" He said to me: "Read what is written on the door of the tabernacle of the sanctuary." And behold, I saw a Roman inscription written in various lights that said: "This is the Heavenly Jerusalem for the one who gave himself for God's word, for those who despised the glory of the ephemeral world, for those who retired to the hills and caverns, and for the hermits who served God."

THEN Michael said to me: "Now come and follow me and I shall show thee the punishment of Hell for the men who denied God, for the rebellious, the evil, and disobedient who did bad deeds before God." The angel took me and placed me on the top of a high mountain and said to me: "Turn back and look to thy right." And behold, I saw a big deep river flowing with pitch, dark as lead; burning charcoal came out of it, and it boiled like a pot; it was fetid. It flowed like the river of Egypt. Men were in it, suspended

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by their feet, and their heads were turned downward. They trembled and fainted. Then I wept and wailed; I fell on my face and said to the angel: "Who are those, O Lord?" He said to me: "These are those who denied God and returned to sin. They will undergo this punishment that thou seest forever."

The angel then said to me: "Turn back and look to thy left." I turned and behold, a river as great as the preceding one flowing with pitch and asphalt. Waves of fire reaching the sky were in it; men were lying down in the fire that hit them. Their bodies withered away so that nothing but their bones remained; God again created flesh above them; the waves of fire came back and their bodies withered away as before. Their wailing was great. I said to the angel: "Who are those?" He said to me: "Those who honored not His Holy Name and those who despised refuge in the name of God, the most high."

And I saw in this river black men standing up with pails of fire in their hands. They drew it and poured it upon them forever. I said to the angel: "Who are those, O Lord?" "These are the kings of the earth, the iniquitous and the oppressors."

THEN the angel said to me: "Turn backward and look." And behold, I saw a great darkness, and cries and shouts came out therefrom. And the angel said: "I say to thee, O darkness, I was sent to thee by God in order that I may show to Gorgorios everything that is inside of thee; unveil thyself and then shalt thou become as before." The darkness was unveiled and behold, the bottom in all its length and width appeared, and it was entirely inflamed with darkness and fire. It was fetid. And men were in it, each of whom underwent a particular punishment. Some of them burned, their tongues were split and reached their chest. I said to the angel: "Who are those, O Lord?" "Those who bore false witness against men."

Some of them were in a great cold worse than the fire and their teeth chattered; they trembled and wept bitterly. I said to the angel: "Who are these, O Lord?" [He said to me:] "These are the mighty who afflicted the houses of the poor and the strangers with cold and frost." . . .

Some of them stood on one foot; they wept bitterly and their teeth chattered. Water dropped upon water [and fire] upon fire. The angels came to them carrying pearls and rings of fire. Their bodies were frightened. He said to me: "They are those who believed in man and abandoned Him and His law."

Some of them had their hands spread in the middle of the fire and vipers of fire bit them. "Who are those, O Lord?" "Those who stole the belongings of others."

Some stood in fire up to their knees; they shouted and wailed, saying: "Woe unto us, we took and inherited the eternal punishment." I said to the angel: "Who are those, O Lord?" He said to me: "Those who judged in iniquity and took bribes."

Some knelt on their knees in the fire and the angels slapped their faces with burning charcoal. They wept bitterly. I said to him: "Who are these, O Lord?" He said to me: "Those who were zealous for divinities other than God." . . .

Others hung by their feet and their heads were downward. Flames hit them from every side; serpents of fire with doglike heads bit them; angels struck them with swords of fire, dispersed their bodies and flaming charcoal fell upon them like hailstones. I said to him: "Who are those and what is their sin?" He said to me: "Those who killed the just and shed innocent blood."

Other [angels] took flaming charcoal and threw it into their mouths from all sides. [I said to him:] "Who are these, O Lord, and what is their sin?" "Those who fornicated with the body of their flesh, who committed adultery, who lusted exceedingly." . . .

Gorgorios said: "Trembling overtook me, and I knew not where I was. And behold, I found myself alone in the cave on my couch. Then I praised and glorified God. I felt sad and great sorrow overcame me for I had perceived the places of the holy and I had seen the great punishment of Hell prepared for the sons of men. Then I wrote down this spiritual story and sent it to all the countries so that it might be of use to all those who accept knowledge. God is gracious to those who do good deeds and who fear the day of reward and of the last judgment so that they may be prepared for the Heavenly Kingdom. I, Gorgorios, glorify and praise the holy God, the only, the gracious and merciful Lord."

We pray and beseech him that he free us from bad deeds, that he help us to accomplish his will, and give us the heritage through grace and pity forever.

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ON THE HORIZON

AND NOW—YINGLISH ON BROADWAY

"Bagels and Yox" and "Borscht Capades"

WILLIAM AND SARAH SCHACK

FOR years they've been comin' 'round The Mountains (Catskill)—those Jewish storytellers, mimics, singers—to entertain the overfed guests with numbers not always so Jewish as the dishes; and now, deviously assembled from Grossinger and Monticello, from Kiamesha Lake and Livingston Manor, from Hunter and Hurleyville, Ellenville and Tannersville, from Fleischmanns, South Fallsburg, and Ferndale, they have converged on Broadway to give us *Bagels and Yox*, and, within the same week, a second show of similar pattern called *Borscht Capades*. In the preceding months, while these shows were playing other cities before their New York opening, radio station WMGM had been featuring "The American Jewish Caravan of Stars," an hour's program offering much the same sort of material and even some of the same performers. Together, these three shows seem to be setting a trend toward a Jewish American theater in which the cast of characters is largely American-born, the material is of mixed nature, and the language neither the King's English nor the *rebbetzin's* Yiddish but a crossbreed that we might call "Yinglish."

None of these shows measures up to any critical standard, even as "lowbrow" entertainment; and though we must admit laughing at many things in spite of ourselves, we were surprised, if anything, that the non-Jewish reviewers had not been even more acid in their comments than they were. For the shows do not have a universal appeal in content, and in style they are not full-scale theater, failing to utilize the stage's resources in costume, in lighting, and above all in movement. With a master of ceremonies, and a band permanently seated at the back of the stage, they are essentially floor shows; *Bagels and Yox* even makes use of a microphone—an insult to the theater. *Borscht Capades* is less noisy; rank enough, it doesn't spew quite as many smutty and tasteless jokes (the "Caravan" is, of course, almost as pure as the air waves); and it is superior musically. But it is still decidedly low-grade. (The Yiddish critics strongly condemned the revues, largely for their pervasive vulgarity. "Moral degradation!" cried one of them, lamenting the laughter of the audience as much as the coarseness which provoked it.)

Storytellers are the mainstays of these programs. After the master of ceremonies has his inning, a straight-faced monologuist like Phil Foster, a mimic like Dave Barry, or an antic crew like the Barton Brothers holds the stage a good deal of the time. If little of their stuff is really original, the best of it is worth seeing and hearing. What *is* new is the departure from the long line of storytellers on the American stage who lent authenticity to

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WILLIAM and SARAH SCHACK, who last month recounted in our pages the early history of the Yiddish theater ("1,001 Nights in the Yiddish Theater"), here examine one of that theater's somewhat dubious descendants, offspring of the torrid summertime romance between Broadway and Second Avenue which is resumed annually in the Catskill Mountains. The hybrid—there are two specimens currently on view on Broadway: *Bagels and Yox* and *Borscht Capades*—has never been officially named; Mr. and Mrs. Schack suggest it might be called "Yinglish."

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their work by Jewish accent and intonation but deliberately avoided outright Yiddish; just as deliberately, the two revues and the "Caravan" try to make capital of Yiddish.

By way of music they offer operatic-cum-liturgic tenors of some quality, singers of folk or popular songs with or without a voice, and instrumental virtuosos (piano, harmonica, surprisingly little fiddle for the people of Mischa, Jascha, Sascha, Toscha). Sometimes American popular songs are given entirely in English; sometimes a Yiddish version follows. The Barry Sisters, monotonous in their uniformly easy-breezy attack and their almost constant harmonizing in thirds, work it both ways, translating idioms sometimes freely, sometimes literally: *"Ich bin meshigeh far-r-r dir-r-r*—I'm crazy about you. . . . Tell me what I am to do. . . ." Then there is a dash of Hebrew, and an aria in Italian which may or may not be paraphrased, in whole or in part, in English or Yiddish.

Finally, the stage shows have some modern dancing and some "exhibition" dancing; and *Bagels and Yox* has a talented ventriloquist in Rickie Layne and his "Velvel." In general, the programs fall somewhere between the American revue and the Broadway movie-palace stage show. And they contain much non-Jewish material, perhaps as a sop to the Gentiles who may wander in, but more likely as a leaven for even a Jewish American audience, which may prefer some relief from a completely Jewish menu, chopped herring and all.

THAT there is a large audience for such entertainment seems proved by their reception. *Bagels and Yox* ran for seven weeks in Miami Beach, ten weeks in Atlantic City. *Borscht Capades* started its career in Los Angeles, where it is said to have played thirty-five "capacity" weeks, continued for twelve weeks in Chicago, and finished its pre-Broadway run with ten weeks in Miami Beach. The two shows opened in New York in September; at this writing, *Borscht Capades* is scheduled to close December 1, but *Bagels and Yox* will apparently run well into next year, and its producers announce plans for a "second edition" to open in Miami Beach December 22.

This success is surely due to a good many factors besides their intrinsic "merit." One large element is the present decade's heightened interest in things Jewish. When the first collection of Yiddish folk songs for English-speaking people was published in this country many years ago, Jewish intellectuals used to say, "My grandmother would love them!" Now everyone remarks on the beauty of the songs when they are rendered with the sensitivity of a Raasche (in *Borscht Capades*), and Hebrew songs in English such as "Tsena" and "Hora" have become hits.

A second factor is the apparent existence in large numbers of a culturally hybrid variety of American Jew, who responds to the hybridization of language that developed in the Yiddish popular theater.

East Siders will recall how, a half century ago, Yiddish-language purists were horrified when some of the newspapers allowed *fenster* to give way to *vindeh*, *bilyeten* to *tickets*, *tsukerlach* to *kendy*. (Abraham Cahan of the *Forward* encouraged the use of such words as a means of acclimatizing—and catering to—his immigrant readers; Cahan referred to the resulting mixture as "plain *mame loshen*.") Outside the columns of the press, people were bolder: they *moofed* their *foinitcheh* into a flat, the walls of which were beautified by a *paintner;* the *gobbage* was removed in a *dumbvaiter;* it has got so—Phil Foster retells this one at length in *Borscht Capades*—that if a fellow can't think of the Yiddish word for "disappointed" and calls up his *bubbeh* for help, he finds out that it's *disahppointed.* Just as most Jews tried to become as American as possible as fast as possible, so their language showed a healthy appetite for the words of the new environment, and the popular Yiddish theater has had to absorb more and more: in the current Second Avenue musical *Don't Worry,* there is almost as much English as in *Borscht Capades* and *Bagels and Yox.* For many children of the immigrants, this linguistic mixing of the two cultrues is apparently an unending source of humor; that it can also amuse a wider audience—and on a higher level at that—has been demonstrated by the success of Milt Gross, Arthur Kober, "The Goldbergs," and Sam Levenson. (It is interesting to note, on the other hand, how the German theater in New York, as long as it lasted, retained as unadulterated a German in a flighty musical comedy as it did in a Schiller play; and the popular Italian American theater still remains jealous of the purity of its language.

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The sociological reasons for this contrast are too complex to be discussed here.)

These new revues draw their sustenance, unhappily, from the shallowest Jewish topsoil; their roots are not so densely branched as they ought to be. The best proof of this is the absence of any one-acters or sketches, which used to be important even in vaudeville programs and which featured Alla Nazimova, Bertha Kalich, and other stars. Gags, however, are a weedy growth, needing only the right sort of club car, cocktail lounge, or night-club microphone. Only the "Caravan" has had anything comparable to the playlet, in the dramatic monologues ably rendered by Jennie Goldstein and Gilbert Mack, some of which squarely confront the life around us without playing for a laugh.

But always the hybrid life. *Bagels and Yox* and *Borscht Capades* are most themselves when they deal with the mixed world of halvah and Hershey almond bar, sunny schoolroom and dingy *cheder,* Sabbath candles and Fourth of July Roman candles, Simchat Torah and the World Series, chestnuts from the itinerant Greek and *heisse arbes* (hot chickpeas) from the wandering Jew, punchball and football, Johnny-on-a-pony and Jewish nut games, Al Jolson and Menashe Skulnik and Clayton, Jackson, and Durante—Williamsburg and Brownsville, East Side and East Bronx, with a week's or a month's vacation, if you were lucky, in the Catskills, Lakewood, or Miami Beach.

In this mixed world, Yiddish was for many youngsters no more integral than the raisins in a bun: according to their taste, they might pick off the raisins and eat them, or spit them out. Understanding it imperfectly, they might be amused or resentful when Uncle Abe and Tante Rivkeh and the rest of the relations got together for a pinochle or powwow. What in the world could *gehockte tsuriss* mean? What was *mycholim?* Unwittingly, the expressive Yiddish fluidity made light of the youngsters' hard-won command of language—which meant English. Yet they could not help but take some pleasure in the smack of certain words and in the exotic names of the foods they loved—how could there be another word for *tsimes* but *tsimes?*—as they might be unduly fearful of the strange and plentiful imprecations even when not flung at them.

The boys and girls grow up. They move away from their parents; the parents die away from them. The manifest content of their lives becomes less and less Jewish. They half forget the Yiddish that they used to know, going to a Broadway show once a week or once a month, to a Second Avenue show once in a blue moon, or never. Now along comes *Bagels and Yox* and *Borscht Capades* and they knock you for a goal. Even if you've been going 'round The Mountains, to hear this stuff right on Broadway gives you one belly laugh after another.

IRRITATED by so much easy laughter in which he was unable to share, Brooks Atkinson, the New York *Times* critic, wrote, "It may be that all the Yiddish jibes are devastatingly funny, but this department cannot vouch for that, and even suspects that in *Bagels and Yox* all Yiddish words are regarded as funny, whatever they mean." As a mere *goy* whose Yiddish vocabulary is very limited, Mr. Atkinson shows a keen intuition. For aside from the Yiddish words used to point up an anecdote, there are others which evoke the same boisterous response without having any such reference. The laughter they evoke, strangely enough, derives from nostalgia, which, we know, can express itself thus as well as in tears, sighs, soft words, or silence. That is to say, along with relief of tension and hostility, there is identification and a new ease: now that we are grown up, near masters of English and having heard many other languages, we can afford to be more indulgent to the challenging tongue of our parents. When you hear the actor roar *a cholerye!* (a plague) it takes you all the way back to Papa, Uncle Solly, or the butcher of your childhood; to think that it ever scared you—what a joke! And *knishes, kishkeh,* and *kigel* remind you of Mama, Aunt Sally, or your dear old next-door neighbor who made these delicacies for you. What a word—*kishkeh!* The very sound of it fills your belly with lead. But you still love it, or think you do, or would like to, but anyway, with the gusto that actor puts into the word, you can't help laughing. Another large part of the audience, those who have been talking Yinglish a long time without knowing it, gets a kick out of hearing it on Broadway of all places, and especially from hearing those robust or cheaply vulgar expressions which the stage and certainly the radio would hardly permit in Eng-

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lish. (And if there is to be detected no little of self-hatred and self-abasement in this display in front of the *goyim,* there is also the expression of self-assertion and even superiority right in their faces—or at least only half behind their backs.)

Significantly, the Yinglish shows do not have any long passages in Yiddish in the dialogue. Only "Velvel," that fresh mug of a ventriloquist's dummy, gets off quite a spiel in which he chides his listeners for not understanding Yiddish; it seemed to disturb the customers. The live actors confine themselves usually to a single word or an idiomatic phrase, and not infrequently they translate it. Sometimes the translation seems impromptu, as if the actor, sensing uncertainty in the audience's response, is hurriedly trying to salvage his laugh; more often the translation is in the script, either dictionary-like for the sake of understanding, or else, in the mode of "Fractured French" or Sam Levenson's Basic Yiddish, as another form of gag: e.g., *shaygetz* (Gentile): a man who buys things retail.

The range of the Yiddish words scrambled into English is as yet limited. There are a certain number of juicy or onomatopoetic phrases. Then there are the two well-defined categories: culinary terms, and expletives, curse words, and vulgarisms. The invocation of the Jewish cuisine is the whole point of the parody on "Come on-a My House" which, instead of plums and pears, lists chicken *fligel* (wings) and *lukshen kigel* (noodle pudding), matzoh balls and halvah. The very mention of herring and potatoes is a prime Jewish American joke, the equivalent of the all-American humor in hot dogs; one gag refers to a man with a herringbone suit graced by a boiled potato in the breast pocket.

A lesser factor in the making of Yinglish is the bilingual pun. As we know from *Finnegans Wake,* the potentialities are enormous, but the examples offered by these shows are enormities, a playing with sound effects regardless of meaning: e.g., "She's a doll." "Yeah, *yisgadal*" (the first word in the prayer for the dead); and there was a strained attempt to make something of Chanel 5 and *Shlemiehl* 5. We have heard better examples offstage—there are creative possibilities.

INDEED, the same can be said of every phase of Yinglish entertainment. At present, Yiddish folk songs, quasi-folk songs, and even liturgical music are often mangled by the bad taste and direction of the hybrid theater, which can allow *Aneynu,* a solemn fast-day prayer, to be followed without pause by boogie-woogie. Such a theme as the lighting of the Sabbath candles, which has in recent months become a kind of light unto the nations—even Sophie Tucker offers one treatment of it rendered in English, Yiddish, and Hebrew—can be handled with discretion, as the tenor Jan Bart did on the "Caravan" and Raasche does in *Borscht Capades,* chanting in accompaniment to a group dance. But in *Bagels and Yox,* Mary Forrest presents her Sabbath chant immediately after a medley of old American popular songs ending with "Alexander's Ragtime Band," and she is atrocious in two extremes—an excessively sentimental beginning switching into a rant which tears the song wick from tallow. Conglomerates of English, Yiddish, and Hebrew are often presented on the "Caravan," and there are likely to be more of them in the future. When Jan Bart strings together, on a narrative English thread and with a brief coda in English, three Hebrew chants—*Kol Nidre, Al Tashlichenu l'Et Zikna,* and *Yismechu b'Malchutcha*—there is small loss of dignity; the very range of the Hebrew songs assures their dominance, and the minor English parts seem an obvious and tolerable concession to a Jewish American audience. On the other hand, Moyshe Oysher, highly popular for his liturgical singing both in the synagogue and out, sometimes offers ludicrous linguistic mélanges, a sign of the poor taste which mars even his genuine gift for cantillation.

So far, the straight numbers in both speech and song—straight English, straight Yiddish—are the best things in the revues. If Yinglish is ever to be endowed with an integral quality, an art will have to be found that digs deeper into Jewish American life and makes sense of its incongruities: certainly there is no lack of material for light as well as serious treatment. But the present revues never get beyond merely naming the various elements, offering the primitive pleasures of recognition. A Yinglish theater which gave a richer reflection of the life it pretends to mirror would not have to serve a bagel and cheese sandwich at intermission, as *Bagels and Yox* does, to remind you why you are there.

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THE STUDY OF MAN

WHEN SOCIAL SCIENTISTS VIEW LABOR

The Conflict That Passeth "Understanding"

WILL HERBERG

A RECENT report by the Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan indicates that the American people rank labor unions second in influence on national affairs, immediately after the federal government and ahead even of "big business." Social scientists—if we are to judge by the relatively small proportion of energy and research funds they apply to studying its various aspects—do not rate labor that high. But they do take it far more seriously than they did in the early 30's, when only a few isolated specialists concerned themselves with the character and problems of American unionism. Since those days labor and industrial relations have become leading subjects of study in various fields of social science.

First to be affected, perhaps, were the economists; the "labor economist" emerged, representing a substantially new branch of the profession. Even in "theoretical" economics, however, the change has been noteworthy, as anyone can see by comparing the attention given to labor matters in the treatises of Marshall and Taussig a few decades ago with the consideration devoted to labor in any of the better works current today. Almost every other branch of the social sciences has by now also developed a "labor wing." Industrial psychology, industrial sociology, and latterly even industrial anthropology, have become recognized branches of study.

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THE most publicized development in the study of labor has undoubtedly been in the area of "human relations in industry." As a result of the desire of some management officials to find out how productivity could be raised, and the discovery that the psychological well-being of the worker played an enormous role in that respect, a whole new field of research was opened: the analysis of conditions so affecting the worker's psychological state as to increase or reduce his efficiency. In his article "Adjusting Men to Machines" (COMMENTARY, January 1947), Daniel Bell gave an informative and critical survey of the main work in this field. In the four years since that article appeared, perhaps more new books and studies have been published on this subject than in all preceding years.

The studies which developed the "human relations" approach were conducted among non-unionized workers in the early 30's. The basic assumption of these studies was the idea that conflicts and difficulties in industrial relations, as in other areas of human life, were essentially due to blockages in "communication." These blockages might be caused by emotional difficulties, by lack of information, or by both, but in any case the obvious task was to devise and implement techniques for "clearing the channels of communication," or to put it in more everyday language, for getting people to "understand each other." The field is full of examples of cases where an undesirable situation in production was cleared up by the discovery of some "blockage" in communication.

But how is this principle to be applied to industrial relations when unions enter the scene? Will it hold when management deals not with a mass of formally unorganized em-

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ployees but with an organization that claims to speak for them? The "human relations" experts believe that it will. They insist that in dealing with unions, as in dealing with individual workers, failures in communications are the principal cause of dissension. Thus one writer in this field (Glen V. Cleeton, "The Human Factor in Industry," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science,* March 1951) asserts: "Although the cleavage at the outset of intergroup discussions usually places management and its representatives on the one side and workers and their representatives on the opposite side, continuation of the discussions brings a realignment of groups which paves the way for mutual understanding." Free-flowing communication between management and workers is felt to be the key to industrial relations.

This faith in the effectiveness of communication implies that there are really no conflicts of interest between unions and management, only false beliefs that there are such conflicts, and that these false beliefs can be dissolved by good communication. Psychological problems alone exist in the "human relations" approach. But conflict between unions and management surely involves far more than psychological difficulties of mutual understanding—though it may of course involve these too. As John T. Dunlop writes ("Framework for the Analysis of Industrial Relations: Two Views," *Industrial and Labor Relations Review,* October 1950): "The interest and ideas regarding communications have been derived, with few exceptions, largely from studies in which no union was present. The analysis of communications is more simple and probably more useful in the absence of the union. . . . It is no accident that the great interest in communication arises in management circles. It is no doubt a useful tool of administration. But as a framework for industrial relations analysis it can be only very limited."

THE fact is that from the point of view of the "human relations" approach, attempts on the part of the union to communicate with workers in an industry seem only too often to be an obstacle or blockage in the one system of communication which is felt to be important—that which connects management and workers in a single plant. The union introduces a "foreign" element which obstructs the free movement of information and leadership along the channels of the factory hierarchy; under union conditions, the worker tends to align himself with the union on the "outside" and take his cue from it rather than from his "natural" work leaders, foremen or management, on the "inside." In their own way, many "human relations" experts are arriving at very much the same conclusion that the hard-boiled industrialists of an earlier age reached without academic assistance—that unions are "trouble-makers" and are always getting in the way of good "face-to-face" relations between management and workers.

At bottom, the orthodox "human relations" approach would seem to be rooted in a rather naive conception of human nature and human relations. This conception, as I have suggested, seems to be that all conflict among men is due to "misunderstanding" and that "talking it over" is the sure road to agreement. Indeed, in a book bearing this title (*Roads to Agreement,* Harper, 1951), Stuart Chase contends that our troubles with Stalin are in large part semantic: neither side at Potsdam "knew what the other meant by 'democracy.'" Mr. Chase therefore urges that the UN employ approved communications devices in order to bridge the chasm between the United States and Russia and to "engineer solutions in matters for which, on a two-power basis, there are no solutions." Most "human relations" sociologists are not quite so optimistic, but their essential point of view is not very different. The fallacy in this line of thinking is obvious. There are not only "misunderstandings" and "emotional blockages" to be dissolved by better communications and "human relations." There are also real *conflicts of interest* among individuals, groups, and institutions that are not to be conjured away by information or psychology, but have to be adjusted and readjusted in changing structures of justice; and sometimes, unhappily, this can be effected only by recourse to temporary non-communication and resort to various types of pressure and force.

The "human relations" approach inherits from Elton Mayo, the pioneer and founder of the school, a fear of facing up to the implications of conflict. Mayo, it seems, abhorred conflict in social life and strove to bring about a unity akin to that prevailing in primitive societies (see Reinhard Bendix and Lloyd H. Fisher, "The Perspectives of Elton Mayo," *Review of Economics and Statistics,* November 1949). He had little understanding of the sources of social conflict and no feeling for the fact that

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"conflict and competition between individuals and groups is one of the cornerstones of democratic Western society." Dunlop, from whom I quote, is quite right in saying that in the matter of industrial relations, "the communications framework advocates a single unity and corporateness in the work community which is basically incompatible with collective bargaining and democratic traditions." On the ideological level, there are striking parallels between the social patterns and values of the "human relations" school and the various forms of organic society advocated by reactionary thinkers, who likewise aim at the maintenance or restoration of a community of labor held together by primitive myths and other devices.

MEANWHILE, the economists have been discussing labor in quite a different context, remote from the insights and naiveties of the "human relations" sociologists. Here an interesting cleavage has developed between the "theoretical" economists on the one side and the "labor" economists on the other.

The former, by and large, though by no means without exception, are frankly hostile to unions. Just as the "human relations" specialists are impatient with unions for "obstructing the free flow of communications," so the economists are seriously annoyed with the labor movement for interfering with the operations of the market. When one takes up a book such as *The Impact of the Union* (edited by David McC. Wright, Harcourt, Brace, 1951), presenting a report of the Institute on the Structure of the Labor Market held at the American University in Washington, D. C., in May 1950, in which "eight economic theorists evaluate the labor union movement," one is rather taken aback by the virulence of the hostility to organized labor there displayed. Of the eight, only John Maurice Clark and Kenneth Boulding are in any way sympathetic. Almost all of the others express their antagonism without much attempt at qualification. They talk about the Taft-Hartley law as a "relatively mild measure of control" which needs "stiffening," consider restricting the scope of unionism to the company, and even discuss "abolishing" unions altogether.

Professor Boulding was aware of this anti-labor atmosphere and felt rather uneasy about it. His attempt at explanation is interesting: "In considerable degree, this attitude arises out of the nature of our specialized skills as economists, and out of the nature of the abstraction which is economics. We are specialists in exchange, in the price system, and in the market. The labor movement is part of the expression of that hatred of the market which has dominated the history of the West in the past hundred years, and which reaches its supreme expression in socialism. But the market is our baby; we cannot help loving it a little."

And so the economist "loves" the market, while labor "hates" it. There is certainly a good deal of truth in this rather unacademic way of putting it. Even if, in his modernity, the economist abjures "value judgments," he cannot, especially if he is of the neo-classical or neo-liberal school, help feeling that the "right" wages are those that result from the automatic operations of the market on the basis of marginal productivity. When unions interfere with these operations* by forcing wages up, they bring about either unemployment or inflation or both and threaten the entire economy (Charles E. Lindblom, *Unions and Capitalism*, Yale, 1949). Some economists, such as Milton Friedman of Chicago (in *The Impact of the Union*), believe that the effect of unions on wages has been much exaggerated but still think that unions are a nuisance and should be restricted or "abolished."

Yet one of the curious things about the contemporary state of economic theory is that for all the economists' love of the market and distaste for union "interference," there is no firm body of doctrine on the effects of unionism upon the wage structure or for that matter on how wages are actually determined. All sorts of possible causes and consequences, positive and negative, are isolated, weighed, and discussed, but nothing in the way of any well-defined wage theory emerges. (For a good summary of conflicting opinions on unions and

*Not merely unions but even the elementary feeling of solidarity that makes one worker reluctant to underbid another and take his job away is deplored by the market-worshipping economist. Thus Paul A. Samuelson states (in *The Impact of the Union*): "I did not say it was just unions. I said the feeling of class consciousness and all the rest so that a man has no way of going to Detroit and saying, 'Give me the job; I will do it for less.' In fact, once he gets in the plant, he immediately changes his attitude and won't do it for less." Whereupon Professor Kenneth Boulding mischievously comments: "If you went to the University of Michigan and said, 'I can do Boulding's job for less.' . . . " But of course even professors—including professors of economics—have wage scales, seniority, and job security, under rather different names.

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wages, see Daniel Bell's article "Do Unions Raise Wages?" in the January 1951 issue of *Fortune*.) In one of the little jingles that enliven *The Impact of the Union*, Professor Clark hits off this deplorable situation:

If workers, low-paid, seek to better their lot
By grabbing some dough from the rich,
It makes jobs for more workers—or else
it does not;
I cannot be positive which.

The love of the market, which is, so to speak, the professional passion of the theoretical economist, is apparently, like so many other love affairs, accompanied by a thoroughly uncritical idealization of the love object. For the market is not the beautiful self-acting, self-adjusting, self-validating mechanism of the economist's dream, apportioning to each "factor" what belongs to it by virtue of its productive contribution; on the contrary, it seems to be a rather confused conglomeration of particular situations in which all sorts of forces, economic, social, and political, are merged and combined. Elements of monopoly and oligopoly pervade the entire system; political factors affect not only wages but farm commodity prices and manufacturing profits as well. The labor market itself does not consist of abstract, homogeneous labor. "In a real sense, each buyer in a labor market is distinguished from all other buyers. There are thus as many labor markets as there are employers of labor" (Gordon F. Bloom and Herbert R. Northrup, *Economics of Labor and Industrial Relations*, Blakiston, 1950). The perfect Dulcinea of the economist's impassioned imagination turns out to be the very imperfect peasant girl of real life.

It is this very imperfect peasant girl of real life that is the preoccupation of the "labor" economist. The labor economist takes as his point of departure what even some theoretical economists are ready to grant, that "most economic adjustments contain a substantial margin of indeterminateness. . . . Within this 'indeterminate' range, other [than economic] influences play upon the result" (Clark, in *The Impact of the Union*). It is within this margin of indeterminateness, we are told, that collective bargaining operates. Exactly what unions can do in the way of changing the wage structure and exactly what effects such changes may have on the economy is as widely disputed among labor economists as among their theoretical colleagues, but the labor economists, despite some weakness in theory, seem to bring to their discussions a much livelier sense of social reality, a much keener feeling for the interpenetration of the economic and the socio-political, than the pure devotees of marginal analysis.

There is little question in their mind, apparently, that labor unions do raise wages. Two recent discussions of the wage problem by labor economists deserve particular mention. Sidney C. Sufrin, director of the Business and Economic Research Center at Syracuse University, comes to the following conclusion: "In the long run . . . wages seem to be related to productivity. . . . In the short run, however, an apparent indeterminacy is indicated [and] there is not much doubt that unions are successful in raising wages . . ." (*Union Wages and Labor's Earnings*, Syracuse University Press, 1951). Sufrin believes, moreover, that even in the long run "the indirect effects of trade unions . . . have been to raise wages"; he refers to the pressure of trade unionism "in goading management into technical improvement and increased capital investment." Very much the same point was made, incidentally, by the conservative London *Economist* in a recent statement reproaching the British unions for their past "moderation" as in part responsible for the stagnation and low productivity of British capitalism and comparing their policy unfavorably with the more aggressive policy of the American unions whose constant pressure for higher wages has helped to keep the economy dynamic and progressive.

Arthur M. Ross, of the University of California, displays a somewhat different emphasis. He is inclined to attribute all-around efficacy to unions in the matter of wages. "Real hourly earnings," he affirms, "have advanced more sharply in highly organized industries than in less organized industries. . . . No reason has been found to believe that this relationship is coincidental" (*Trade Union Wage Policy*, University of California Press, 1948). And he does not think that the consequences of this fact have been unfavorable to the economy as a whole.

Sufrin and Ross have somewhat different views, too, on what constitutes a "responsible" wage policy on the part of unions. Sufrin thinks such a policy would include four considerations: ability to pay, living standards, productivity, and the growth of the economy. Ross

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is much more skeptical as to the possibility of determining the consequences of any particular wage adjustment for the industry and for the economy as a whole. The employment effects of wage increases, he says, are "unpredictable before the fact and undecipherable after the fact." He therefore holds that a responsible wage policy cannot be based primarily on speculations as to the over-all economic consequences of the union's demands. Greater responsibility, he contends, can be brought into the wage bargain if "erratic fluctuations in business activity are reduced"; if union security is increased since such security is "the *sine qua non* of responsible behavior"; and if the scope of the wage bargain is extended to cover a larger section of the economy.

The gulf that separates theoretical and labor economists can be judged from the fact that whereas Ross urges a master wage bargain for the entire economy as the foundation of economic responsibility, Chamberlin, Friedman, and others participating in the theorists' symposium seriously propose restricting the scope of union activity to the single company!

WHATEVER may be their differences, Sufrin, Ross, and most other labor economists agree in emphasizing that trade unions are not primarily economic institutions in the way business concerns are. Trade union leaders are understandably annoyed when economists present them with "irrefutable" economic arguments against their demands for a wage increase. For they know that trade unions are not merely economic institutions, operating by a simple economic logic. Trade union leaders have to think of their members, of the internal opposition, of other unions, and of a whole range of *political* considerations foreign to economists, though less foreign perhaps to businessmen.

Ross has formulated this insight in a striking manner. *"A trade union,"* he says, *"is a political* [i.e., power] *agency operating in an economic environment."* Both sides of this formula —the political and the economic—are important. The "human relations" specialist has much to learn about the political side; he has to realize that one's ability to make oneself "understood" and to get others to "listen to reason" is not unconnected with the possession of power to *give force* to one's argument. The same lesson about the union as a political (power) organization could be of value to the economist who tends to think of unions as monopolistic business concerns intent on maximizing income. Ross shows very well the futility of this approach. Of course the union leader must get economic returns. But he must also confound his factional opponents in the union; he must show his organization to be better than its rivals; he must gain the support of the rank and file, he must preserve the union. And this might lead, for example, to striking for some small advantage that would be completely outweighed, economically, by the losses incurred in the strike.

By that same token, the trade union leader, while very well understanding the power mechanics of his organization and of collective bargaining, is apt to forget that he is operating in an economic environment, which makes demands, sets limits, and enforces consequences, although unfortunately these are not always very clear. And both the political and economic aspects of the union have particularly to be urged upon those who, like Frank Tannenbaum (*A Philosophy of Labor*, Knopf, 1951), tend to think of unionism in oversimplified sociological terms as a kind of new "society" giving the workers status amidst the disintegration of community resulting from industrialism. Ross's formula—"a political agency operating in an economic environment"—seems to me to embody an authentic understanding of trade unionism in our society.

Ross is particularly forceful in his analysis of the union as a power organization. He makes a distinction between the union as an institution and its membership, and he further distinguishes both from the union leadership, and shows how the various factors operate in the process of collective bargaining. The operating rationale of unionism is "survival and growth," the "maintenance of the union as a going concern," with which the interests of the members and the "professional ambitions" of the leaders are intimately though not always harmoniously linked. This pressure for survival, security, and expansion is a major factor in collective bargaining. Collective bargaining is, of course, also an economic affair, but the economic forces do not operate simply and directly, as they are supposed to do in the mechanism of the market. For "political stakes are paramount over economic bargaining; power is worth money and often more than money."

Ross's "political" categories make intelligible what has always puzzled the naive economics-minded observer but is quite axiomatic for every union leader and seasoned union member,

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namely, that the "recognition," security, and power of the union are essentially inarbitrable and take precedence over all considerations of wages and earnings. Unions are basically power institutions whose social function it is to protect the interests of those who take orders in the economic process by establishing an effective counter-power to mitigate the unlimited and irresponsible power of the order-givers (management). This social function is recognized by the labor economists and the more social-minded, less market-enamored theoretical economists alike. "The trade union as the constant watchdog of the interests of labor is wholly desirable and to be applauded," Sufrin states. "Unions are vitally needed for [non-wage] purposes, connected with the protection of the human rights of workers on the job," Clark emphasizes in *The Impact of the Union*. But it is doubtful whether most of the theorists would agree; their notion seems to be that if the market were freed from obstruction and interference, it would give the various "factors," including the workers, all the protection they need.

Ross frequently refers to the wage activities of unions as their "foreign affairs," thus reminding us of another important field of union activity, one that is of an inner or "domestic" nature. A recent collection of papers entitled *The House of Labor: Internal Operations of American Unions* (Prentice-Hall, 1951), prepared under the auspices of the Inter-Union Institute and edited by J. B. S. Hardman and Maurice F. Neufeld, shows how complex and far-flung these internal activities are. (Perhaps "internal" is not the best word, since both politics and community services are included; perhaps non-economic or even non-wage would be better.) This collection is a pioneer work and is bound to prove immensely useful. Not that all the papers are of the same quality; some are merely official press releases and others unimaginative though valuable compilations of facts. But at its best—in the contributions of Hardman and Neufeld, in the discussion of union administration, press, and staff activities, in the piece by William Gomberg on industrial engineering—it is very good indeed. The contributors to this volume and the economic theorists who participated in the symposium recorded in *The Impact of the Union* seem to be living in different worlds; yet they are talking about the same thing and it would be well if they got to know each other.

One of the most serious internal union problems is that of membership control of the almost unlimited power of the union leader. The matter is not a simple one. "The provisions of trade union constitutions and by-laws," Ross points out, "are ordinarily as democratic as any advocate of popular government could desire. But an apparatus, no matter how carefully designed, cannot guarantee the objective it seeks. It is not proof against the need for technical knowledge and tactical skill, a need which constantly enlarges the scope of authority of leadership and limits the role of the rank and file. . . . The procedures for rank and file participation in the wage bargain have increasingly become tools for the use of leadership. . . . [In other words] the procedures originally designed to guarantee control *by* the rank and file have become devices for the control *of* the rank and file. . . ."

There is frank and intelligent comment on this question in *The House of Labor*, in papers by the two editors. Hardman, for example, notes how difficult it is to have effective democracy in unions "with the structural absence of separation between executive, legislative and judicial powers, and with no press to voice or support dissent, except the official journals controlled by the administrative authorities." But no one has yet suggested any solution to the problem.

Ross's work, and some of the essays in *The House of Labor*, help supplement and expand the point of view which seems to be the most adequate so far developed for the understanding of the American labor movement: the philosophy of the "Wisconsin School," initiated by John R. Commons and now headed by Selig Perlman. In *A Theory of the Labor Movement* (Macmillan, 1928), Perlman almost twenty-five years ago marked out the distinctive characteristics of the American labor movement. He has himself recently summarized his approach in the following way (in *The Annals*, March 1951): "Labor [is] building up two kinds of unofficial 'governments,' each around the job interest. One [is] a government for the labor movement itself, erected on the principle of exclusive union jurisdiction. . . . The other kind of government, dealing as it [does] with the conditions of employment, [has] to reckon with the employers, but under it the unions [seek], wherever possible, full possession of the job territory, through the closed union shop."

American unionism is thus a "job-conscious" unionism. "Job consciousness," Perlman says, "is

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primarily an emphasis on what is nuclear, what is the central core of labor's interest, which under the spur of changing conditions is likely to compel a widening area of labor interest," including not only the so-called "fringe" demands but politics as well. Yet throughout, "the job interest must remain the nuclear one if the movement is not to weaken or disintegrate."

This conception not only does justice to the basic facts of American labor reality; it also stands as a warning against the fantasies of certain sociologists and "progressive" labor leaders who are beginning to think of the union as somehow possessing jurisdiction over the entire life of the worker, as competent to meet his needs and interests on every level, and therefore entitled to claim control over all his activities. American unions make no such totalitarian pretensions. They are, as Philip Taft puts it, *"single-purpose organizations."* This the Perlman theory makes quite explicit and emphatic. It thus serves well as a philosophy of democratic unionism in a democratic, pluralistic society. (See my article, "For 'Limited' Against 'Total' Unionism," *Labor and the Nation,* April-May 1946.)

The increasing preoccupation of organized labor with political action in the form of electioneering and all-year-round political lobbying has been frequently noted in recent years.* Perlman has urged that this tendency represents no break with the "job-conscious" philosophy of American unionism but rather a continuation of the same fundamental attitude under drastically changed conditions (*Labor in the New Deal Decade,* ILGWU Educational Department, 1945). Others have dissented. But aside from a few valuable articles in *Labor and the Nation* and some special studies in more academic journals, very little work has been done to bring to light the implications of this major development in American labor policy. Labor leaders themselves have not been particularly helpful, for their thinking on the question has rarely got beyond the level of denunciation and self-justification, while sociologists and political scientists have by and large remained content with the repetition of untested and uncriticized generalities. Here too a new approach, taking into account the many dimensions and levels of trade unionism, might prove rewarding.

It is obvious that there is a good deal of sociology implicit in the work of the "Wisconsin School" and of power-conscious labor economists such as Ross. But no systematic sociological study of the American labor movement has yet been undertaken. The writings of Philip Taft on judicial procedures in unions, on union administration, and union opposition movements are of notable value, and so too is the work on leadership and membership participation being done by Joel Seidman, Jack London, and Bernard Karsh at the Industrial Relations Center of the University of Chicago. But these, and others that might be mentioned, are only isolated contributions and tentative beginnings. There are dozens of treatises on the *economics* of industrial relations and collective bargaining, but so far in this country there is hardly one that may be said to deal with the *sociology* or *politics* of trade unionism and labor relations.

In part, this lack may be due to the inveterate prejudice that unions are primarily economic institutions, business firms on the other side of the fence, so to speak. In part, it is no doubt due to the difficulty of applying the familiar techniques of sociological research to the labor union situation, and in part, too, to the natural reluctance of union leaders to permit "outsiders" to snoop around and quiz them and their members. But largely, it seems to me, the reason is simply the traditionalism and routine-mindedness of the academic world. The conventional scheme of "social problems" is there and is rarely questioned. But labor unionism is not just a "problem" in the economics of the market or in the mechanics of social equilibrium and conflict; it is one of the major social institutions of our time and should be studied as such. A respectable amount of research now goes on; in view of the significance of labor unionism, far more is necessary. But this will hardly be possible until sociologists become more conversant with the "house of labor" from the inside and learn to know their way about. Perhaps what is really needed is a new kind of social scientist who is at home in, because he really belongs to, both the academic world and the world of organized labor. A few such social scientists there already are; upon them rests the major responsibility.

* The involvement at various times of large sections of the American labor movement in radical socialist, syndicalist, and Communist politics has left almost no mark on contemporary academic writing dealing with the labor movement. The subject will receive large-scale consideration in the forthcoming *Socialism and American Life.*

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LETTERS FROM READERS

Mr. Fiedler on the Hiss Trials

To the Editor of Commentary:

I suppose Leslie Fiedler took his academic life in his hands by stating in cold print that Alger Hiss is guilty of treason. His fellow professors will undoubtedly burn him at the stake for witch-hunting. Nevertheless, I hold no brief for Mr. Fiedler's courage. His article—"Hiss, Chambers, and the Age of Innocence," in the August 1951 issue of Commentary—carries its own insurance. For though he states a few obvious facts about Hiss, he makes sure to turn away the wrath of the Hissites by denigrating Whittaker Chambers and perpetuating the shameful myth that a shrewd defense lawyer and two captive psychiatrists created. This is the way of the politician; it is hardly what one would expect from a literary critic and a professor of the humanities.

Perhaps my criticism should be aimed at Fiedler's method. Had he bothered to speak to Chambers, to his associates, to those who have known him long or fleetingly, the article might have turned out differently. Instead, Fiedler read two books, a scattering of transcript, and a few newspaper clippings. Literary critics, I know, look down on "journalists." But any newspaperman who applied Fiedler's method to a workaday assignment, who sucked "facts" out of his thumb so blatantly, would in short order find himself on the street or teaching college journalism.

"Any good bourgeois bristles when confronted with Whittaker Chambers," Fiedler writes with aplomb. . . . It is not the good bourgeois who bristles when he meets Chambers. It is not the farmer whose hackles rise. Chambers' neighbors in Westminster—and there is not a professor among them—stuck staunchly by him through the worst of the Hissite smear campaign; they responded to him as a man and they respected his courage. Only the urban liberal intellectuals succumbed to the Hiss propaganda; the last bastion of Hissism today is manned not by the bourgeoisie but by Harvard and Columbia professors. . . .

Fiedler makes two more statements about Chambers which cannot bear even the most casual examination: (1) "They [Hiss and Chambers] are men who could never have met outside the Communist movement," and (2) " . . . he [Chambers] is the sort of person of whom one believes immediately quite unfounded stories of insanity and depravity" because of his "unprepossessing air." Both statements are nonsensical to the point of idiocy. . . . How never meet? Because of birth and antecedents? A check of the Hiss and Chambers family records will show that Chambers comes from an immeasurably "better" family than Hiss. Because of money? Even without an apparatus pushing him up, Chambers made considerably more than Hiss when once he set himself to his chosen work of writing. Ability? Chambers is accepted as by far the best writer and editor in the news-magazine field; Hiss has a quick mind and the instincts of a slick salesman. . . .

The sort of person who believes that Chambers is the "sort of person" about whom anything can be believed . . . did not see Chambers at the second trial when, unplagued by a hostile and arrogant judge, he quickly won over jury and spectators by his manner, his directness, his quality of personal communication. . . .

Ralph de Toledano
Associate Editor
Newsweek
New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

I am writing because I believe that you and your readers have a right to know that almost all of the facts purporting to come from the "record" in Mr. Fiedler's article on "Hiss, Chambers, and the Age of Innocence" are either misquotations or deliberate distortions of the testimony. . . . There are few facts from the record in this article—probably not more than a dozen or two, and of these apparent "facts" (some of them based solely on Chambers' testimony) I find ten distortions or misquotations.

I won't bore you with all of them but I cite as a sample the sentence . . . on page 112 where Mr. Fiedler writes, "As a matter of fact, he had even once, for certain obscure reasons, let the deadbeat move into his apartment for a couple of days, or was it weeks." The record shows that not only did Alger Hiss's testimony on this sub-

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ject never vary (note the implication in "a couple of days, or was it weeks") from the fact that he rented his apartment for several months to a man who did not, at that time, appear to be a deadbeat, but that Whittaker Chambers also testified to occupying the apartment for six to eight weeks at least. Their testimony as to the reasons differed, but the reasons appear obscure only in Mr. Fiedler's article. . . .

HELEN L. BUTTENWIESER

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I am inclined to think that Leslie A. Fiedler's article, "Hiss, Chambers, and the Age of Innocence," in your issue of August 1951, was the best single article I have read on that grimly fascinating subject. I should like to make explicit something which is certainly implicit in Mr. Fiedler's discussion of the attitude both of Alger Hiss and Julian Wadleigh. That something is the compulsion that we all ought to be under to observe ordinary rules of good faith, standards of conduct and mutual relationship worked out through long centuries of experience. Both Hiss and Wadleigh probably felt warranted in transcending those rules out of some higher law of duty to "humanity" as they understood that duty. This anarchic concept of duty in defiance of good faith is, as the Hiss case illustrates, extraordinarily dangerous. That is true in other relationships than those of a government agency to one of its trusted employees. . . .

To this I would like to add a second observation: it has rarely been given to any man to do so much harm to civil liberties and tolerance and free discussion as was done by Alger Hiss. Repeatedly even in our own minds we who want to protest the baleful McCarthy influence on free speech have been checked by the question, "Yes, but what about Alger Hiss?" . . .

NORMAN THOMAS

New York City

Praise from the Pacific

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I wish to thank you so much for the excellent magazine that you publish. Your perspective is something exceedingly hard to find in publications of today, and one which vanished from the general press years ago. I refer specifically to articles that reveal a depth of understanding and analysis, like "Hiss, Chambers, and the Age of Innocence," and Herbert Lüthy's "Why Five Million Frenchmen Vote Communist."

LIONEL GOODWIN

Laguna Beach, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Let me take this occasion to congratulate you on the superlative quality and evocative profundity of your magazine. . . . Let us, however, have more controversy and diversification in your letter columns. . . .

MRS. SAMUEL SACHS

Los Angeles, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I feel called upon to write and tell you how moved I was by the article "San Nicandro's Jews in Israel," by Phinn Lapide, in the September COMMENTARY. . . .

SALLY L. ROTHBERG

Melfort, Saskatchewan

The Hebrew-Christian Evangelist

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I am surprised that there was no response at all among COMMENTARY's readers to Harry L. Golden's excellent article "Hebrew-Christian Evangelist: Southern Style" (December 1950). This lack of interest in the mission movement came to my mind again when Dr. Arthur Michelson of Los Angeles gave a lecture in one of the smaller churches of this city. I went out of curiosity and was probably the only Jew there—aside from Dr. Michelson. The small church was crowded with Gentiles, though. He is a forceful speaker and told his audience how a Jewish mob at Los Angeles, "led by the rabbis," was throwing stones and rotten tomatoes at him; that a young Jew seized him by the throat, endangering his life; that the rabbis incited the crowd and encouraged violence; that, finally, thousands of Jews liked to listen to him but the rabbis did not permit it. . . . If it is true—as Harry Golden believes—that there is silence about the mission activities in Jewish circles, it is hard to understand. . . .

HEINZ HARTMANN

Syracuse, New York

In the Dark of Africa

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As an enthusiastic reader of COMMENTARY, please, please let me urge you to look more deeply into the African situation touched upon in the August issue by Rita Hinden and Barnet Litvinoff. I have traveled intermittently in Africa for the last twenty years, have been in every part of it, including the unadministered areas (now almost gone) west of Lake Edward, have spoken one or two of the main languages, and do not have any commercial or governmental interests whatever. Emphatically, I am not one of those who would sidle up to

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you with a furtive leer and tell you that the native is fundamentally an uneducable child. . . .

What I want to tell you is this: there exists a very serious problem, with terribly complex ramifications, which is building toward an explosion in Africa, and any of your readers who run into that problem equipped only with the well-meant information contained in the two articles mentioned will be a positive menace. The most probable outcome of this mental state, on the part of anyone going to Africa, is that in six months he would be so disillusioned as to repudiate all liberal hope and fall victim to the worst sort of racist thinking.

The first thing that your reader would become aware of is the fact that the African native, so different in appearance from tribe to tribe, has almost everywhere the habit of atrocious cruelty. It is a part of his cultural heritage. . . . Taboo and gloomy anxiety rule many of the primitive communities with an iron hand, assisted by priest-politicians. Any of your women readers would be really badly upset to discover the treatment of African women by African men. The beautifully dressed, pleasant-spoken Kikyu gentleman sitting across the way in the railroad compartment has insisted that his daughters be mutilated in the nauseating ritual of female circumcision, and his wife is the poor, bent, veil-swaddled beast of burden who meets him at the station to carry his suitcases roped to a headstrap across her brow, while he strolls ahead. . . . The African is a human being, no more, no less, and it is very disconcerting to find what a difference it makes to a human being to be born in the bronze age. There is a darkness in the primitive world. What we think of as the universal sense of individual responsibility . . . is actually a tenuous superstructure . . . [which] has no place in the minds of most Africans.

We have failed utterly in communicating to them—en masse—any sense of personal responsibility, of scruple towards others, any of what some of us value in our civilization. . . . In unadministered Africa I have spent a night two hundred yards from a crowd that was dismembering and eating a man of another tribe who had been in the vicinity when some goods were stolen. The first corpses I ever saw in my life were those of two men who had been informally crucified on ludicrously inadequate stakes, by their fellow tribesmen. The point here is simply that readers who do not know what savage life and savage exploitation are like may jump to the conclusion that what is needed is to give the African our techniques, and a chance to show what he can do. . . .

MRS. H. D. SHELDON

Toms River, New Jersey

On Jewish Education

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Though I am really not qualified to comment on Midge Decter's article ("The Fruits of Modern Jewish Education," October 1951) as an "educator," I have taught for a few terms in Sabbath schools and for longer in a Hebrew "prep" school—and I do care about the child's "Jewish heritage."

It is vitally important, I think, that the individual of Jewish birth should not be allowed to grow up in rootlessness and in ignorance of our people's great ethical tradition and history. But from memories of my own Jewish education, beginning with a *cheder* in London, England, it was my father's stories about the Maccabees and Don Isaac Abarbanel that made me feel cosily and proudly Jewish, rather than the *chumash* class in which we went over and over, interminably, the same early chapters of the Toldoth Yeshurun and bellowed in concert, mischievously, that the earth was filled with "violets" (Genesis 7:11).

On the other hand, the author's belief that nothing can take the place of the great Jewish texts is well founded. My four uncomfortable —let's say "maladjusted"—years in the Teachers Institute of the Jewish Theological Seminary were compensated for by the experience of reading the Hebrew Prophets and the Book of Psalms in the original.

It seems to me that, if only from the viewpoint of what is practical, the offering of our heritage must be a matter of degree. No ordinary person with the usual concerns can grasp the entire lavish content of Jewish learning. There is more than the full life-span of a scholar can undertake. With regard to the Jewish child the question is, rather, of showing that the treasure exists and indicating where it can be found. If the present-day curriculum —"Jewish mud-pies" included!—has made the Hebrew school a happy place, that's all to the good. It is to sources of pleasant experience that one looks for more of the same. Couldn't our policy-making teachers work out a course for the graduating class—parallel with the Bar Mitzvah—in which passages from Jeremiah and Isaiah, great psalms and pithy proverbs, even a condensed English version of the Book of Job, emphasizing the story—could be read, along with some explanation of the historic background that gave rise to them? . . .

As to the continuance of the Jewish aristocracy of learning, Mrs. Decter is unduly—though admirably—nervous. Scholars there will always be.—Why not?

JUDITH ISH-KISHOR

Brooklyn, New York

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To the Editor of Commentary:

I read Mrs. Decter's article with a great deal of interest, and I am in agreement with many of the strictures contained therein. The situation she describes is certainly to be deplored and criticized. . . .

Mrs. Decter is, however, certainly wrong when she asserts that "for these gentlemen [referring to "such men as Scharfstein, Chomsky, and many of their colleagues in Palestine"] just as much as for Hebrew teachers, Hebrew conversation *per se* seems to have become the compensation for a general failure to get beyond it." Anyone who has followed my writings in Jewish education for nearly a quarter of a century knows that she misrepresents my position in regard to Hebrew. I have stressed the importance of Hebrew in our curriculum, but only insofar as it serves as the vehicle of Judaism and as the only avenue through which one may gain direct access to the sources and bedrock of Judaism. I have never made a fetish of Hebrew conversation *per se,* and I have maintained this position in the face of severe criticism by some of my colleagues and workers in the field.

William Chomsky

Graetz College
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

To the Editor of Commentary:

The education and life of the traditional Jew in the ghetto were prescribed by a culture which grew out of the needs of the time. . . . I have no doubt that if Mrs. Decter had been living in Chelm, she would have considered Yiddish a "tasteless, diluted, patented" product. Rashi, of course, she would have accused of tampering with the traditional Hebrew texts, the Bible and Talmud.

Mrs. Sydney Lewis

Richmond, Virginia

To the Editor of Commentary:

To publish Mrs. Decter's caricature of Jewish education under the high-sounding title "The Fruits of Modern Jewish Education" is not only misleading but in fact a grave crime against all those professionals and laymen who are putting so much effort into modern Jewish education.

Mrs. Decter's diatribe culminates in the statement: "We have buried the Jewish classroom: with it, the Jewish school. We have erected in their place the Jewish playroom." This conclusion is so exaggerated that it amounts to a distortion. Of course, the methods of progressive education and "the condition of the entire community" have brought about a deep change in Jewish schools. But teachers, school boards, and the children themselves who do not want to waste their time have worked hard to adapt "Jewish content"—and not merely techniques—to the Diaspora community of 20th-century America. . . .

L. H. Grunebaum

Scarsdale, New York

Those Mothers

To the Editor of Commentary:

Allow me to congratulate Sylvia Rothchild on her story "The Mothers" in the October issue of Commentary. The piece may justly be called a sociological study rather than a story. This is not said in dispraise. It strikes a necessary admonitory note, though I am afraid the moral will be missed by those who need it most.

Mrs. Rothchild knows, as must everyone who has observed the Jewish community of New York City, that large numbers of Jewish mothers avail themselves of child-study guidance, read articles and books in the field of psychology, attend clinics and lectures devoted to the subject of parent-child relations. It may even be true that, percentage-wise, more Jewish women than Gentile participate in these activities. The fact remains that incidents such as those so devastatingly pilloried in "The Mothers" can be observed in East Flatbush, in the Bronx, in Williamsburg, in Brownsville, yes, and in the mid-Eighties, every day of the week. . . .

D. B. Berenberg

Brooklyn, New York

"The Poet and His Times"

To the Editor of Commentary:

I read with a great deal of interest the piece by Alfred Werner on Ernst Wiechert in the August issue. For the sake of historical accuracy, however, I should like to correct one error made by the author. The speech by Ernst Wiechert on "The Poet and His Times" was not, as Werner states, "published in France in Lichtenberger's *Le Troisième Reich.*" The speech was not published in France and Lichtenberger never published a book under the title given by Werner. In 1936 Henri Lichtenberger published a book called *L'Allemagne nouvelle.* It was translated into English under the title *The Third Reich.* . . . The American editor translated Ernst Wiechert's address and included it in his edition of the Lichtenberger book, published by the Greystone Press in 1937. It was, as far as my knowledge goes, the first time this speech was printed anywhere.

Koppel S. Pinson

Queens College
Flushing, New York

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Herzl's Zionism

To the Editor of Commentary:

Mr. Lester Seligman in his article "Theodor Herzl: Outsider as National Leader" in Commentary, September 1951, does not do justice to Herzl and his conception of Zionism. It seems to me that the conclusions he draws are based on a superficial investigation of Herzl's ideas. Thus Mr. Seligman writes, for instance, "The *Judenstaat* does not mention Palestine with all its rich associations in Jewish history, religion, and culture." This statement is incorrect; the *Judenstaat* does mention Palestine and stresses its importance for the Jewish people. It says: "Palestine is our ever memorable historic home. Its very name would become a colossally stirring rallying cry for our people."

Most of the other conclusions at which Mr. Seligman arrives are equally incorrect. Thus Herzl's Zionism was not at all based on the simple and pure "territorial solution" as Mr. Seligman wishes us to believe. In his excellent study on the subject, Dr. Oskar K. Rabinowicz (*Fifty Years of Zionism,* London, 1950) has proved that this and similar objections to Herzl and his conception are unjustified. He quotes Herzl as saying that his "Zionism signifies not merely striving for a legally assured soil for our people but also striving after moral and intellectual perfection," for it was Herzl who defined Zionism as "the homecoming to Judaism even before the return to the Jewish lands."

Kurt K. Schwarz

London, England

Postwar Germans

To the Editor of Commentary:

Most of the studies cited in Dr. Roberta S. Sigel's article "What Germans Think—and Why" (September 1951) depended for their findings on opinion polls of Opinion Survey Branch of the American Military Government or tests given to German prisoners of war in the United States, or tests and questionnaires given to screen German applicants for important posts (analyzed in Bertram Schaffner's *Father Land*). This being so, it is regrettable that Dr. Sigel not only failed to indicate the different method of investigation employed by David Rodnick in his book, *Postwar Germans,* but gave a most misleading account of the book's scope and conclusions.

Dr. Sigel states that "Rodnick studied a relatively small group of factory workers in Western Germany who engaged also in part-time agriculture to supplement their incomes." Actually Rodnick, who is an anthropologist, did five months' intensive field work in Central and Northeastern Hesse, primarily in two towns, one hundred miles apart, and in their outlying districts in which most of the skilled workers had their residence. "These two towns with their varied population seemed to offer a representative cross-section of Protestant Germany," Rodnick stated.

Moreover, in the course of his investigations, in which he was assisted by his wife, Rodnick "observed or questioned some 1,500 Germans of both sexes and of all ages and classes." . . .

As to Dr. Rodnick's conclusions, suffice it to say here that not only did he find "much more affection in German family life than other observers," as Dr. Sigel reports, but that he was able, because of his approach and methods of study, to bring to light significant variations in German personality and society which have been all too often overlooked.

Esther S. Goldfrank
Staff Anthropologist
Chinese History Project
Columbia University
New York City

Minding Our P's and Q's

To the Editor of Commentary:

David Daiches in his reply to Milton Konvitz included the following argument as a logical principle: "If you believe such-and-such, then it seems to be logical that you should do such-and-such. If you don't do such-and-such, I cannot see how you can profess to believe such-and-such" (Commentary, November 1951). I hope Mr. Daiches will not find it pedantic for a teacher of logic like myself to point out a fallacy in his statement, for I still admire his intellectual honesty and sincerity in criticizing those who overlook the incompatible elements and difficulties in both the Orthodox and Reform versions of Judaism in their relations to modern civilization.

The stated argument is of the form: "If p, then q; hence if not q, then not p," where p stands for "you believe such-and-such" and q for "you should do such-and-such." But this form is valid only when "not q" and "not p" are the contradictories of p and q respectively; and the contradictory of q is not, as Mr. Daiches has it, "you *don't* do such-and-such" but "you *should not* do such-and-such. . . ."

Philip P. Wiener
Philosophy Department
City College
New York City

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

Everyman on Babylon's Shore

THE SECOND SCROLL. By A. M. KLEIN. Knopf. 198 pp. $2.75.

Reviewed by ALLEN MANDELBAUM

THE present work by A. M. Klein is novel, travel book, personal memoir, history-biography of the Jew as wanderer, confession of faith, and work of love. This multiplicity marks the ambitiousness of *The Second Scroll* and its impressiveness: no other Jewish writer in English has attempted to give symbolic—as against episodic—form to so much Jewish experience. And where Klein fails, his failures are themselves significant; for in casting up before us experimental images of the Jew, Klein—even in nostalgia, fuzziness, or inadequacy of insight—is everyman on Babylon's shore. Klein is drenched with *galut*, but curiously un-Western; longs for the exotic, but is revolted by its realms; rises to magnificent prose and stumbles to Corwin rhetoric; is more capable of irony than the unsuspecting might divine, but falls into the mantrap of bathos; knows where his heart is, and articulates seldom with his head.

The work, in short, is an intimate portrait of one who is certain that Jerusalem is not a place but a people, and also that Safed is somewhat closer to it than New York or Montreal—but one, too, who is not quite able to convince us that Jerusalem really *is*. Klein's symbolic mentors are Joyce and the Rabbis (not rabbis), but where Joyce lifted the Irish into world literature (as Gogol did the Russians) by eyeing them remorselessly, Klein attempts the same for the Jews through love, a mighty lever indeed, but in this book not always enough.

Klein's chief instruments of condensation are a "plot" that superimposes, on one narrative line, many places and many meanings, and a hero, the Jew, who is protean enough to accommodate hell and heaven in less than two hundred pages. The narrative line follows the Pentateuch, with one chapter for each book:

GENESIS. The narrator (let us call him A.M.), in his childhood in Montreal, hears of the Talmudic exploits, in distant Ratno, of his mother's younger brother, Melech Davidson. The *ilui* ("prodigy") turns Red, however, after a White pogrom, and years pass in which Uncle Melech—now Comrade Krul, "the international authority upon the decadence of European literature"—is not heard from.

EXODUS. A.M., now an established poet, is invited by his publisher in 1949 to visit Israel, to seek out and translate "Israel's latest nest of singing birds." Before his departure A.M. receives a letter from his alter (ancestral, too) ego, Uncle Melech, whose image A.M. had for decades "illegally carried" in his mind. In a sorrowful-joyful look-I-have-come-through account, Melech tells of his rejection of the dialectic and reassumption of the Talmudic after the Nazi-Soviet pact, and his miraculous survival under the Nazis in Kamenets (but *"Why? Why did I escape?"*). Now he waits passage to Israel at a DP camp at Bari.

LEVITICUS. No Melech in Bari, nor in Rome. He *had* been there, and Monsignor Piersanti of the Vatican, who had befriended Melech, still hopes, as an anxious, Sheen-like fisher of souls, for Melech's return. Nor had he gone to Israel. From one of Melech's friends, A.M. learns that "not yet fully rid of the Diaspora infection . . . Melech desired to go to Casablanca." The Joint Distribution Committee had found a place for him in its office there, and A.M.'s next port of call is ordained.

NUMBERS. In the hell of the *mellah*, and A.M.'s pen here has infernal vividness, he learns that Melech-Quixote has flown the coop for Israel after getting into trouble with the "authorities." He had collected, then made public, facts and figures on the *mellah's* diseases and distress, and then, to cap it all, had led a crowd of "the halt, the crippled, the dumb, the blind" in a raid on the penal compound to free the Jewish beggars.

DEUTERONOMY. A.M. arrives in Israel. He finds no great poets after Bialik, but much poetry "in the streets, in the shops, everywhere

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about me," and hears at last, in the synagogue of the Ari in Safed, of a new sage—Melech. The newcomer Cabalist, preaching redemptive mysteries, is however shot down during the truce by Arab assailants, who then try to burn his body with gasoline. From city and settlement, all flock to his funeral, symbolic of national consecration. A.M., too, attends; but he has never seen the living face of Melech and now must bear forever in his mind his "own conjured image of Uncle Melech."

THE five chapters are parables on the passing scenes of history. Rome echoes Titus; Casablanca, Moorish Spain; Safed, ages on end. The ephemeral hero is, as Melech ("King"), David's son, the Anointed One (whose modern oil is the gasoline)—the sought-after Messiah; and as *ilui,* Bolshevik, near-Catholic, Cabalist—the seeker of Messiahs. In concealing Melech's living face, and filtering him through to us by indirection, A.M. charts his own quest. But it is a quest deficient in drama, because A.M. himself is only nominally seeking. He is, essentially, always at one with his Fathers, and little of Melech's struggle with other ideas and salvations is Klein's.

Not that the prose, in its heightened and inflated tone echoing the Joyce of the Sirens or the Cyclops episode in *Ulysses,* is without humor and detachment. Klein's irony may be heavy at times, but it is there, not only in his style but in his use of symbolic motifs. The substitution of gasoline for oil denotes not only the presence, but the absence, of God. Nor does Klein lack a critical eye. His pages on contemporary Hebrew poetry, on Uri Zvi Greenberg and Nathan Alterman, are intelligent and perceptive. But the final scene, with the narrator saying *kaddish* over the body of the dead Melech, and its florid catalogue of the tribes of Israel, is too like a sentimental gathering of the clans. And the appendices that follow do little—except in one case—to help the book.

These long appendices form a second scroll to *The Second Scroll;* they are five glosses (one for each chapter), two from the pen of A.M., three by Melech.

The gloss for "Genesis" is "Autobiographical," a poem evoking the golden age of A.M.'s childhood in Montreal. But Klein's "Hebrew violins/Sobbing delight upon their Eastern notes," or "Love leading a brave child/Through childhood's ogred corridors, unfear'd," or "...my sadness in remembered joy/Constrictive of my throat," lapse into movie-poetry—if Hollywood were seeking verbal equivalents for movie-music.

The second gloss is a premature elegy for Melech as embodying European Jewry. At its best, the poem is reminiscent of Hart Crane's diction and extravagance, and in its wrathful denunciation of those who slaughtered God's own recalls Tchernichowski's "Zot T'Hi Nikmasenu," or the pentateuchal *tochecha* (commination). It is too long a poem, however, to sustain the emotion that in Milton's "Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints," suffices for a sonnet.

Gloss three is the richest and most effective. It is an excerpt from a letter written by Melech, "On First Seeing the Ceiling of the Sistine Chapel," to the Monsignor who awaits his conversion. In ornate prose, Melech, confronted by magnificence, describes his vision of the Michelangelo paintings as a hieroglyphic prophecy of the bestiality to which Christian civilization will sink, and an assurance of man's redemption, signaled now for Melech in Israel's survival.

The fourth gloss, a play written by Melech in Casablanca, urging upon the Arab fellowship with the Jew, descends, I feel, to pious homiletics at too many points to leave many readers comfortable.

In the last gloss, sections of a liturgy composed by Melech, there is some worthy devotional poetry, but much of its worth, and even its excitement, reminded me of A.M.'s own previous comments on the Orthodox poets: "Their theme a continual backward-glancing to the past and their technique a pedantry of allusiveness, their work was of Moses mosaic, a liturgy, God's poetry, which is to say poetry for the Most Merciful of Readers."

KLEIN'S reliance on incantation, nostalgia, and exclamation points may not be out of order (perhaps he does have a miracle to shout about); and the texture of his work is never thin. When he writes well, he writes very well; and his love for his matter, Jews, has so little pretension in it, so much good will, that it becomes contagious. Sometimes, however, the task of the reader and the writer is to escape contagion. Fewer catalogues and more precision, less celebration, more dramatic precision and self-examination—less, in short, of what Klein does only too readily and effectively, and

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more of what he neglects—would strengthen his work. But that work, even as it stands, is a uniquely rich document in the library of Jewish literature in English, one of the few works in this tradition that belong also to modern literature.

Brownsville Idyll

A WALKER IN THE CITY. By ALFRED KAZIN. Harcourt, Brace. 176 pp. $3.00.

Reviewed by DAVID DAICHES

ALFRED KAZIN writes about the Brownsville of his childhood and youth, about the *"urime Yidn,"* the poor immigrant Jews and their families who led there their warm, shabby, picturesque, humble, and devoted lives; about the sights, sounds, smells, and general atmosphere of Brownsville homes and streets; about the impact on a sensitive Jewish child growing up there of the claims of the big city beyond and of America as a whole beyond that. The book is organized as a series of sketches, each one built on a walk through certain streets; the autobiography is not projected in a straight line but emerges indirectly as bound up with the memories induced by those walks; and underlying everything is a fine savoring of physical sensations belonging to this kind of life and this environment.

The physical sensations are linked at each point to the boy's developing emotions and attitudes, and perhaps the best quality of a book which calls for praise on several grounds is the almost lyrical way in which this linking of sensation to attitude is made persuasive to the reader. The narrator moves easily from memory to direct evocation of what is remembered, from the streets of Brownsville as they are now to what they were and what they meant for him as a child, and the book is thus at once an evocation of childhood, an essay in autobiography, and a topographical study. Its relish of sensation projects the very quality of living in that way at that time in that atmosphere, and the underlying theme of the development of a boy's sensitivity—of his responses to his neighborhood, to his city, to his country, as well as to his Jewishness and his Jewish past—enriches the narrative so that it becomes more than a sociological picture and more than a study in mood: it becomes a contribution both to Americana and to Judaica.

This is in large part a picture of poverty, of life in shabby Brownsville as opposed to the more spacious living of the "allrightniks" in more favored districts. But it is poverty with a difference—poverty, one might say, Jewish American style, different from poverty Italian American style and even more different from any European variety. There is never any suggestion of hunger—indeed, the most extraordinary variety of comestibles floats through the book: in addition to the traditional Jewish Friday night dishes, we get a remarkable medley of *nasherei.* "At home we nibbled all day long as a matter of course. On the block we gorged ourselves continually on 'Nessels,' Hersheys, gumdrops, polly seeds, nuts, chocolate-covered cherries, charlotte russe, and ice cream." The narrator and his friends seem always to have been eating and drinking, eskimo pies, jelly apples, hot peas, miscellaneous eatables bought from men with carts, Jewish, Italian, Syrian, or unidentified American. (The Jewish children I remember from my own childhood, gorged though they often were at home, never had the pocket money for such extra-curricular activities.) Jewish parents vied with each other in filling up their children: that was one thing America could provide: food was good and a lot of food was better, and we see the parents happily ladling the food into their offspring.

Jewish American poverty: no sooner have I described it as different from any European variety than I am reminded of similar scenes in Whitechapel or even in the districts of Edinburgh where the poorer members of the Edinburgh Jewish community lived. I remember the mixture of shabbiness and profusion, the continuous cry of mothers to their children: *"Ess, mein kind, ess!"* as though to be stuffed was to be guaranteed survival in the new Western world. British Jews too looked back to *der heim* in Poland or Russia with a mixture of nostalgia and horror, and in the shabby streets of London's East End, of Manchester, of the Gorbals in Glasgow, or St. Leonard's in Edinburgh, Jewish children faced the same mixture of cosiness and yearning, of warmth and desperation, and felt, too, the impact on their minds and emotions of the great world of "beyond" as well as of the claims of their own traditions. And if their discovery of their present country took place side by side with their discovery of their past, their response was likely to be similar to that which Mr. Kazin records so sensitively here.

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One cannot help being struck with the failure of formal education—both Jewish and American—that emerges in this story. Whatever Mr. Kazin learned at school, it seems clear that it was educationally insignificant and nothing to what he taught himself, while the *melamed* who taught him the minimum amount of Hebrew to enable him to get by on his Bar Mitzvah was apparently contemptuous of the possibility of giving any real understanding of Jewish history and religion to an American-born child. The result of this is a curious emptiness where we might have looked for something dominating and central. There is American Yiddish chatter and "folkways," but no Hebrew culture and no contact whatever with a living religious tradition. This makes the author excessively vulnerable to his own religious discoveries, and is perhaps responsible for the one piece of sentimentality in an otherwise restrained book—the apostrophe to Jesus, following the account of his discovery of the New Testament. It should be added that he had to discover the Old Testament and the Jewish prayer book for himself too.

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by VICTOR GOLLANCZ

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Though there are aspects of this story that are immediately recognizable to anyone with experience of parallel Jewish communities in other parts of the world, one must not underestimate the American—or even the purely Brownsville and New York—aspects of this book. The sea-change undergone by Jewish life when it rooted itself in America is made abundantly clear in these pages. It is all here, the street life, richly combining the Jewish and the American; the school, with its stern ideal of antiseptic success set over against the warmer Jewish concept; the Negro quarter slowly encroaching on the Jewish and provoking puzzled and casual resentment; the Italians, and all the other varieties of Gentiles; and behind all—the great *beyond* of New York, of America, always there, always challenging, but only slowly developing into a reality.

These memories are presided over—as, for some reason, memories of childhood almost always are—by summer, and some of the most effective paragraphs are those in the final section describing life in the hot summer streets. Here again the recollection of physical sensation is the clue to the success of Mr. Kazin's writing.

An autobiography, an evocation, an apologia, an ode to America, a sociological study, the case history of an American Jewish childhood—Mr. Kazin's book is all these things. It is a moving and impressive record, and may well stand as a classic of its kind.

Politics as Dancing

The Watch. By Carlo Levi. Farrar, Straus and Young. 442 pp. $3.75.

Reviewed by Harold Rosenberg

Every place has its own kind of time. This includes the pace of its people in their work, entertainment, action—the rate of speed at which things move and happen there. But the time of a place is also something more than pace. It is part of the landscape, both the visible landscape and the hidden landscape of memory and feeling. It has to do with the depth of the surface image, the length of the historical reflection underneath it, like the reflection in water underneath a tree. In different places, streets, objects, ideas descend different distances into the past.

America, for instance, builds and acts on a

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thin time crust—its constructions reach upwards rather than down; its politics take account of the immediate future rather than of the past. Its watchword is the tempo by which the materials of the earth are transformed into things that can be seen, touched, used—the word Productivity.

American time has stretched around the world. It has become the dominant pace of modern history, especially of the history of Europe. Other places, other peoples, find themselves overlaid by the American time surface—they are *in*, or under, this American time. The recognition of this fact is part of every European revolution. In its serious days, Bolshevik doctrine specifically enjoined party members to purge themselves of Russian sloth, egotism, and nostalgia and acquire "American efficiency"—according to Albert Rhys Williams, Lenin "was constantly assailed for having a peculiar leaning toward America" and was called by his enemies "an agent of Wall Street."

Among European countries, Italy suffers in the extreme from a conflict between Italian time and the time Italy is in. The time of the land of the Caesars and of Rome conspires with its astringent sunlight to keep things motionless and intact, as if they stood in a vast bowl protected from the air currents of change. Objects get emptied out there and crumble, nothing is left of them but an outline, but they are not transformed. Yet, especially since they turned to Fascism and war, the Italians also became enveloped in the ground mist of modern historical time, through which finally they saw armies clash in their fields, bombs fall on their towns, their means of livelihood disintegrate—until their liberation was declared and the fabulous GI's dashed among them in jeeps.

In *The Watch,* Carlo Levi, who studied the time that stopped two thousand years ago at Eboli, has sketched the landscape of the double time of Rome and Naples, with its old palazzi turned into weird apartment houses, aristocratic ladies collapsed into black-market peddlers, intellectuals who are peasants underneath, politicians who are priests in disguise. Levi has a physical sense of the hollow of time in which his country lies. In Rome, he says, "the sky is not so high" as elsewhere, and at night you can hear from all parts of the city a low indistinct roaring as of the lions of antiquity or "like the echo of the sea in an abandoned shell."

The spirit of modern chauvinism is the veneration of local time and a burning hatred for universal time, that is, for modern history. You behold this spirit in its freest state in a D. H. Lawrence, a chauvinist of *all* places, and with a passion to plunge into a native black or a native brown time while trying to extricate his tail from the machinery of Western change. . . . The opposite of the chauvinist spirit is that of the radical internationalist, in whom local time is dead or for whom it exists only as a bitter barbaric residue.

Neither a chauvinist nor an internationalist, Levi experiences the Italian counterpoint to contemporary time as a fact of the human universe, a mystery. The native time that lives in him is a reality that he both embraces yet feels the need to transcend; the universal time in which he lives is a counter-reality that he both fears yet feels the duty to confront. In the rather crude symbolism with which he has chosen to tie together his sketches of places and people, the Italians need a *watch,* though they are bound to feel clock time as a tyranny and something in them has broken the dial and bent the hands of the watch they have.

The important thing is that both these times shall meet and produce a single time. In a tempo that will be both their own and universal, the people will free themselves and make their own history, in their own image. Such a human renewal of time means revolution—but not the revolution arising from the chauvinist intoxication with local time nor that produced by the radical hammer beat of a time detached from place. The true revolution can only be the merging of the local and world rhythms into a single genuine duration.

That is what happened briefly in the Italian Resistance, when men and women all over the country felt their own time surge up in them and mingle with the motion of world events. It was a surge of *dancing,* in which inner beat and external tempo are combined.

Milan was in ruins, but—"the streets were filled with an exuberant, inquisitive and happy crowd. They were going to meetings, to rallies, for a walk, or who knows where? They all seemed happy to see one another, to breathe, to discover themselves again, to feel they were alive. . . . The people of Milan danced, the night deepened, the dancing continued without interruption, as though a miraculous trance controlled the muscles of those girls who had eaten so little for so many months. The lanterns went out one by one, and the dancing

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still continued. . . . In that light, in the whole city, the people of Milan danced, embraced one another trustingly, as though it was the first night of the world."

That dancing was the Italian revolution. It was one of those moments, as with the British at Dunkerque, when politics or war becomes a close, personal act, when the individual reaches his own height in communion with others, when the past gushes through the present into a broader stream.

" 'One can't go on dancing forever,' I thought vaguely." *The Watch* is the account of how the dancing ceased and of what was left in the morning. It is a narrative of the end of the movement in 1946 when the Resistance premier resigned and the professional politicians called a halt to the music of change. It reflects the yesterday of triumphant hope, a hope that was an anticipation of a different metaphysical condition of being, against a today in which Italy's two times have become sundered again, the Italians are sinking back into their old forms of life, and history is once more becoming strange to them.

The Rome through which Levi walks after he has come to take over the editorship of a Resistance newspaper is a landscape of misery and hallucination—black-market stalls whisk in and out of their camouflage; the stranded Poles of General Anders' army, unhappy liars all of them, have replaced the Americans in the bistros; crooks, whores, and beggars have brought their techniques into line with current conditions; the intellectuals are mixing new brews out of every conceivable cliché. The new is wedged like a weapon into the flesh of the old. With a lively eye and an open intelligence, Levi notes the appearances, as well as the shudderings of pain and of effort shown in the yarns, fables and oddly formed opinions, of this folk "driven into a time that was not their own."

Once the dancing had died down there was left to Italy its poetry of the past and its magnificent sky. But fallen apart into its double time, the country could not create any new poetry. It would have to raise its productive capacity—and to the Italians this meant not poetry but prose, a rhythm not from within. Yet lapsing into their ancient lethargy, they dreamed of an American paradise of depthless speed, a contemporary myth on the far side of the sea of purification. "To live over there," says Matteo, the linotyper, who had worked in America, "one must first forget a few things, also songs. It's a great country, everything's different. You feel it's different, not because of the houses, the skyscrapers, the subways, the elevated. It's different because they never turn to look back, and they don't have anything behind their shoulders. . . . You might just as well forget your real name, it doesn't count for anything. We always have something over our shoulders: the family, the country, the party, our own ideas, and what has happened before, but over there?—Nothing. . . . You must forget everything, throw everything away and always start from the beginning. You must plunge into the water. . . . It's like a revolution that burns up everything that was there before. That's the only way to become an American. You have to enter the circle and run like the rest, hurrying faster and faster. America runs. It's not built like a house that stands firm on its foundations the way we're made. It seems instead like a huge top or a huge gyroscope that rests on the ground on only one fine point and still stays steady because it's whirling, and the faster it whirls the steadier it is. . . . The first colonists had left behind, with no will or chance to return, Europe with its worn parapets and its ancient

CHILDREN WHO HATE

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gods and history. From this voluntary gesture of renunciation was born the new thing that was America. This gesture with all it stood for was the American baptism."

With society deprived of its dance tempo and with the touch of American time turned to a fantasy-revolution, Italian politics re-assumed its old definition. Once again it had become the function of the professionals centered in ageless Rome, a "country outside the world and outside of time." Existing above their own time, like the bureaucratic *Luftmenschen* in all the capitals of the globe, they would attempt to reconcile the physical time of Italy with its American dream time. But living apart from time, they would only reconcile the two times as abstractions and would create nothing.

For Levi and his friends, these professionals, and those who thought and felt like them, were the enemy. "Rome signified all those negative aspects of a world that was false and had failed; its name stood for the centralization of power, inept and parasitic bureaucracy, nationalism, fascism, the empire, the bourgeoisie." But Levi has no answer to the bureaucrats (who has?). Without the dancing he and the Men of the Resistance were no longer political men. "They [the Left and the Right] said he [the resigning Resistance premier] was not a man of politics, that he represented no real force, that he did not know how to maneuver among entangled games of special interests, that he was nothing but a neutral and symbolic figure."

For Levi politics means the "eternal" moment of popular enthusiasm, and only those moments. When I talked with him shortly after the war, while the Resistance was still in power, he was impatient with questions concerning capitalism, Bolshevik organizational techniques, loans, relations of production. How could these determine the future? The new energies in the Italian people would transform everything. Politics consisted of hoping for the prolongation of the dance.

Perhaps the conversation was pointless on both sides. If the "historical elements" I referred to were going to dominate the situation, there was no reason why we, interested in human time and dancing, should concern ourselves with it. On the other hand, if the future was to be a completely creative novelty, that would be a miracle about which nothing could be said in advance. At any rate, with the essential social energy of politics missing, as well as its essential value, Levi had only the choice of joining the enemy or lapsing into inactivity and "irresponsibility."

This choice between "bad" politics and no politics is a tragic choice—a kind of Hamlet impasse that exists in many countries today; for example, one reads of its afflicting gifted youths in Israel. For there is, apparently, no remedy for the decline of that popular vitality that gives meaning to political action; yet, to follow Aristotle, without politics man is not his own kind of animal. The politics of the dancing "moment" may be utopian—and it is probably naive to remark: imagine what England would be like if the spirit of Dunkerque had been sustained. But this politics is revealed to be not at all utopian when the matter is put negatively: imagine what England would be like if Dunkerque had never taken place, if Dunkerque had been impossible for the British. Are not the Germans an example of a people devoid of their moments, or whose moments have been contaminated by hate and indifference to the human? (Rosa Luxemburg criticized the revolution of 1918 because it *forgot* to abolish capital punishment.) The politics of the dance *is* a politics, even if it does involve time-vacuums and tragic stalemates.

Fundamentally a landscape painter, Levi lacks the passion to communicate the tragedy of the modern frustrated will for creative social action. Though an exile under Mussolini, and today, in a sense, still an exile, he writes with a sort of soft detachment, if anything even more pronounced in *The Watch* than in *Christ Stopped at Eboli*. He is genial, warm, and at times sympathetic, but self-centered, over-conscious of his particular interests as an artist and thinker, on occasion almost smug—a rather typical anarchist-intellectual temperament. The symbol of the watch, with which he tries to provide a beginning and an end to his tour of encounters, adds little in feeling or comprehension to his concrete observations. Nor are his philosophical comments either profound or original—"the time of a watch is the exact opposite of the real time inside and around me." Sensitive to Italy's two times and that they are out of joint, Levi has the ambiguous good fortune not to be too unhappy about it. But if, as Paolo Milano says, *The Watch* is a "narrative mural," and only that, its distinction lies in its historical perspective, a rare merit among contemporary writers.

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Irgun's Confused Vision

THE REVOLT: STORY OF THE IRGUN. By MENACHEM BEGIN. Schuman. 386 pp. $4.00.

Reviewed by HERBERT HOWARTH

WHATEVER view you hold, or may have held, of terrorism and its place in the Israeli national struggle, you will probably be disappointed with the book in which Menachem Begin has now told his account of it.

From 1943, Begin was the leader of Irgun Zvai Leumi, the "National Military Organization," that small but powerful faction of the underground which did not accept the discipline of the Jewish para-government, but preached and practiced violence as the quickest means of bringing a Jewish state into being. He was hunted by the British police and army; a price of $10,000 was set on his head. He was at once the inspiration, the symbol, and the logical product of a movement which had been slowly manifesting itself in Jewish life through the preceding decades, a movement to abandon the "white" civilized self and rediscover and entirely trust the "black" fighting instincts.

You may have thought Begin wise or unwise, justified or not, but you could not live in Palestine between 1943 and 1948 without feeling the fascination of his single-minded pursuit of his concept of honor, and the disproportionate force of the handful whom he drew to his cause. Moreover, few though his active adherents might be, you were bound to recognize that he was no eccentric, but arose because a section of the people willed him to arise. He belonged to his country and his time.

Thinking something like this, you may turn to his book expecting to reconquer the excitement and the vision of those years when the Jewish state was being born; expecting, now that an interval has passed and a purer judgment can be made, to understand the emotions of that period more deeply in the act of reliving them; expecting to see, for good or ill, more clearly into the philosophy of terror. The book does not wholly respond. Even in the very midst of it you will catch only a half-light here and there, and you may fall out of sorts with your memories and be further away than ever from understanding.

It may be said that memory should have nothing to do with the assessment of a book of this sort, that whatever value it has it will have for all who read it, irrespective of whether they saw the ruins of the Palestine police stations, or gave a casual friendly cup of coffee to a terrorist and smiled at his embarrassment. But once Begin's book is considered solely on its merits as a source of information, what can be said in its favor? The narrative disorder of the book is a matter for despair. Begin's English editor has foreseen some of the difficulties and inserted footnotes to explain the background of the story and the significance of some of the names; but, naturally, it has been beyond his task to amend the sequence of the story itself. The "Altalena" affair of 1948 is several chapters ahead of the King David Hotel explosion of 1946. Within many chapters there are disconcerting hops from subject to subject without regard to dates. Only a mind perfectly familiar with the events can follow this zigzag.

Perhaps Begin was not concerned with an international audience when he wrote, but meant his book to serve as a local apologia, an exposition to the men and women of Israel of the circumstances through which they lived and suffered no less than he. For Israeli readers, perhaps, this narrative is automatically clear; the general reader outside Israel, whether Jew or Gentile, will find it difficult.

MANY general readers, of course, will nevertheless find their way through *The Revolt*. I cannot help thinking that the book's impact, at least on the liberal Western mind, will be jolting, and that it will give rise to doubt and questioning, rather than sympathy. Its rhetoric supports much that Begin's critics have urged against his outlook: extreme sentiments, a medieval moral code, dramatics, self-magnification, intolerance. One of the fundamental sayings that came out of Palestine in the 40's came, not from Irgun, but from Eliyahu Golomb, the leader of Haganah—"Only those who hate resistance are fitted to resist." There is a depth of humanity and resoluteness in that saying, and it is the antithesis of the spirit that frequently seemed characteristic of Irgun. Did Irgun entirely hate resistance? Begin often describes his pain at having been the cause of loss of life, and I believe all that he says. But his particular statements tend to be outweighed by the larger attitude of the book.

He quotes his own radio address, given (still on the secret transmitter of Irgun) on the day the Jewish state arose: "It has arisen only thus.

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Through blood, through fire, with an outstretched hand and a mighty arm, with sufferings and with sacrifices. It could not have been otherwise." When ancient phrases like these are echoed in a messianic vein by the quasi-Irgunist poet Uri Zvi Greenberg, they will carry away readers in the West as well as the East. But in the inevitably demagogic prose of a political leader, they may drive us to the opposite pole, and make us think again of the humanitarian achievement of the Diaspora.

The sardonic wit of *The Revolt* is scarcely humorous. Its tears lose their quality and dissolve into a gesture. Its display of the spirit of comradeship—which in reality was beyond suspicion and one of the most convincing and genuine expressions of the movement's wholeheartedness—sounds self-conscious. How far all this, the prevalent climate of the book, is due to mere bad writing, or to poor thinking, or to the differences of a way of thinking that descends from an East European intellectual lineage and seems sheer and drastic to the West, this is not the place to measure. For the present purpose, the hard conclusion is that many of those who know nothing of Irgun but what they read in *The Revolt* will find in it the marks of certain forms of ardent, superior indifference—to individual delicacy, above all—which they rightly or wrongly regard as dangerous to the life of the future.

To ME, the feeling that Begin's story will confirm his opponents against him and win him not even a portion of understanding from the wider public brings a touch of regret. This is what makes me appeal to the tribunal of memory. The eight years in which I have known the Jewish people have been spent in company averse to Begin: from 1943 to 1946 I belonged to the Mandatory government, and, taking in the situation of Israel bit by bit, I learned to think that Irgun was noble but wrong, and tactically harmful to the Jewish community; from 1946 to 1948 I worked in the Information Services of the official Jewish governmental agency, which judged its long and patient policy to be hampered and undermined by the activities of the Begin group. Yet, while I have thus much reason to understand and opt for that other form of resistance which was most often plain hard work rather than heroism, I cannot wish that any history should be written which ignores the contribution of the other side, nor that the spokesmen of the other side should be misconstrued because of the poor presentation of their own case. It would be as bad a mistake to take umbrage at *The Revolt* and reject it en bloc, as to accept it at the author's own valuation.

If I remind myself today of men and women whom it was my fortune to know in Israel, and remind myself further that this one, that one, or another may have been a member or sympathizer of Irgun Zvai Leumi, I am unable, by personal experience of the rectitude and sweetness of soul of those people, to make any sweeping condemnation of their political faith.

Some will reply that the honor or charm of a man does not justify his politics. The truth of such a reply is obvious but only partial. W. B. Yeats has told how an old Fenian, reflecting on the history, otherwise so embittered, of the revolutionary factions in Ireland, said to him, "There was never a cause so bad but that good men will follow it for good reasons." That which a good man will follow for reason's sake I cannot hold to be utterly bad. Somewhere in itself it must secrete a seed of real hope.

So it clearly was with terrorism in Palestine. Many motives drove men to it. To many of the older people the incentive was despair at the

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spectacle of destruction in Europe. To some the incentive was a gradual conviction of the effectiveness of brute strength. But to the youth, and it was they who embraced terrorism most eagerly, it came as the eternal confused vision. And although the affections of young men and girls change and fix on other objects, they would not have chosen their first loyalty unless they glimpsed a spark from heaven in it.

Those Israeli friends who, outnumbering the Irgunists and no less pure-hearted, resisted the appeals of this terrorist resistance and chose not to forswear their civilized selves in founding their state, who chose rather to sustain that sense of the preciousness of the individual which I. M. Lask once described to me as a specially Jewish contribution to thought, what shall I now say of them? As they remember that they manifested the highest courage of patience in awaiting the orders of those Jewish institutions on which they had staked their destiny, some of them may well feel that, in allowing Irgun its merits, I have allowed myself the pleasures of heresy, and of a perfectionism that is not valid in dealing with the affairs of our own time. And some of my own English friends, or rather the Englishness in me, might add that the final strength of Irgun lay, paradoxically, in the humanity of those it fought against, a long-instilled humanity finally supervening over all blemishes. Irgun could have done nothing against an Irgunist mandate, those English friends or this English self might say. But also, three years after the foundation of the Jewish state, it is time to say that the Irgun too played a positive part in the work. Irgun forced the pace. That was worth doing. The solid preparations were made by the Jewish institutions, the brunt of the task was borne by the forces of Haganah and the whole community of the land. But the speed of success was increased by Irgun. And, above that, in certain periods of desolation Irgun comforted a people by representing in living form its semi-legendary images which alone could give it strength.

Religion and Progress

THE BELIEF IN PROGRESS. By JOHN BAILLIE. Scribner's. 235 pp. $2.75.

Reviewed by GOLO MANN

WHEN J. B. Bury published his *Idea of Progress* just thirty years ago, he noted the "prevalent feeling that a social or political theory or programme is hardly tenable if it cannot claim that it harmonizes with this controlling idea—progress." One wonders whether that was exactly true in the heyday of Spengler. Still, a good deal of the pre-1914 spirit must have persisted in the post-1918 world, especially the English-speaking world. The spirit of a period never dies entirely, suddenly, everywhere. Even today, some of the positivism and optimism Bury represented is still alive. But, to understate the case, less of it than in 1921. A treatise on the belief in progress will no longer start like Bury's by saluting it as the beneficent god of the age.

On the contrary, it will start by saying that the belief has collapsed. This they all say who in recent years have written about the problems of the philosophy of history, on both sides of the Atlantic: Collingwood and Reinhold Niebuhr and Loewith and Jaspers and Alfred Weber and Sorokin, and innumerable others. Concerning the breakdown of progress, there is such a consensus that the mere statement has become trivial. Actually, it may by now be more urgent to try to save what can be saved of a creed that has done useful duty for some hundred years. That we can no longer believe in progress as the total, perpetual movement of the race in an absolutely desirable direction—that much we know. There are so many things that we know we can no longer believe in. The question is: what can we believe, what can we hope, what can help us to live, if not in peace and harmony, at least without the permanent threat of ultimate disaster?

In a certain sense, Professor Baillie's study is an attempt to rescue the belief in progress by reducing it or guiding it back to its original source, Christian Biblical faith. But this positive effort is not the strongest side of his work. To this Scottish divine, Christian progress means the Christianization of the earth, partly at least, in the literal sense of an ever increasing success of the foreign missions. The belief in progress must be once again this hope, the inspiration of this activity, or it can be nothing. The votaries of merely secular progress, the positivists, the liberal materialists, will raise strident cries against this interpretation of progress; but, Baillie asks, what do they have to offer?

Not much, perhaps. Progress, Baillie points out in an irrefutable passage, was an influential but always inarticulate idol, not capable of precise definition. It could have been destroyed by the power of theoretical analysis long before it

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was destroyed by the force of facts. So much the worse for those who still cling to it. But if facts are not such as to warrant the belief in progress, they are, clearly, not such as to warrant the belief in this particular progress, the replacement of the other world religions and ideologies by Christianity.

However, there is no intrinsic need for such a parochial interpretation. Baillie shows convincingly that the belief in progress was a "Christian heresy," a by-product of the Jewish and Christian understanding of history. It is this origin, the sense of the new, the unique, the earnest, of the freedom of things historical, that can be saved from the wreck of secular optimism. In order to do one's best in time and for society, to be immune to the various brands of pessimistic naturalism, fatalism, cynicism, nothing is needed but to take the creations of time seriously; which will always mean at the same time to doubt and have good will, to fear and to hope.

That the core of Biblical faith, inasmuch as it has to do with history, is human freedom, which involves the possibility of evil, is brought out by Professor Baillie himself, and even more clearly in a book which parallels Baillie's in a striking fashion: Reinhold Niebuhr's *Faith and History*. Both works were written in the same year, and independently of each other, although Baillie knows Dr. Niebuhr's earlier publications. Both authors deal with the same problems and quote the same sources. They see three basic notions of history: the classical and naturalist, the Judeo-Christian, and the modern rationalist and optimist. They refute in much the same manner the rationalist hope that man's fate will one day be planned scientifically and that evil is nothing but lack of knowledge. They stress the difference between natural evolution and historical progress, calling the same prosecution witness, T. H. Huxley, to the stand. They make much of the distinction between technical progress, which is a fact, and "general" progress, which is a pseudo-religion. (Baillie: "Observed progress is mainly technical, whereas believed progress is mainly spiritual.") Both offer the same plain, good, and obvious solution of the pseudo-conflict between science and religion: namely, that religion in conflict with science is not religion but bad science, and that science in conflict with religion is not science but bad religion. Yet while they agree in all this and a good deal more, the nuances by which they differ are not without interest.

Baillie rather plainly rejects 18th-century rationalism as too optimistic: "The hindrance now is not that we do not know enough but that we are not good enough. . . ." There, Niebuhr offers an extremely sophisticated inquiry into the identity of mind and self, the dialectics of man as the creator and creature of history. Baillie is wont to think that Arnold Toynbee may after all be right when he fancies all fallen civilizations as wheels on which the chariot of religion mounts higher and higher towards Heaven. Niebuhr rejects this speculation as quite unconfirmed by history. Baillie notes regretfully, "how slowly and how faultily" Christian civilization has advanced. Niebuhr denies any advance at all and would, if I understand him correctly, deny the very notion of Christian civilization; to him, there are no absolutes in the realm of civilization and politics. Niebuhr, in short, is the more radical of the two, and one may as well add that he is the richer and profounder mind. His analysis of our aberrations and illusions often recalls that of the more solid existentialists, Jaspers above all. He has the existentialists' contempt for positivism, that scientific superstition; their keen sense for the historically unique character of our age; also for evil; also for eternally recurrent human sins like

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self-righteousness and *hubris*. If none of these aspects is absent in Baillie, they are not forced upon us with the same intensity.

Since both books, of about equal length, were written in the same year on the same subjects by two Protestant theologians, it has been impossible not to draw this comparison. It should, however, not be regarded as detracting from the value of *The Belief in Progress*. Baillie is more complete and systematic in his historical survey. Besides, he is kinder to his readers. There is in his writing an edifying element which may do good to some; there is also an element of hopefulness and warm-heartedness that will do good to many. Both works are fine examples of what Protestant Christian philosophy at its best can offer today to the thinking layman.

Two of Stalin's Victims

HENRYK ERLICH UN VIKTOR ALTER. Compiled by VICTOR SHULMAN with the assistance of an editorial committee. New York, Farlag Unser Tsait, 1951. 472 pp. $4.00.

Reviewed by LUCY S. DAWIDOWICZ

SOMETIME in the middle of September 1941, an NKVD colonel named Aron Arkady Volkovsky, right-hand man to Lavrenti Beria, visited Henryk Erlich and Victor Alter in their hotel room in Moscow. Both men, leaders of the Jewish Socialist Labor Bund of Poland, had been released from prison only a few days before, after two years under sentence of death. Volkovsky urged them to look upon their years in prison as only an "error"; he spoke eloquently of the common struggle against Hitlerism, and finally he proposed that Erlich and Alter become the heads of a worldwide Jewish committee against fascism. The two Socialists agreed to draft a plan for such a committee.

Early in October, upon completing their memorandum, they were invited to meet Beria. After examining the memorandum, Beria informed them that since their plan involved action outside the borders of the Soviet Union, only one person could pass on it—Stalin. Accordingly, Erlich and Alter wrote a letter submitting their memorandum to the head of the state, and soon after went to the temporary capital of Kuibyshev to await his reply. At midnight on December 3, 1941—just ten years ago—a telephone call summoned them from their hotel; they left, saying they would return in an hour. They never came back. In 1943, Soviet Ambassador Litvinov informed William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor, that Alter and Erlich had been executed in December of 1941 "for active subversive work against the Soviet Union . . . including appeals to the Soviet troops to immediately conclude peace with Germany."

THE present volume, published in Yiddish by the Jewish Labor Bund, contains biographies and personal memoirs of the two men; the last two letters they wrote; the texts of their memorandum and accompanying letter to Stalin about the proposed world Jewish committee against fascism; an account of the futile attempts made to free them and of the protests that followed the news of their murder; a complete bibliography of published items on this international *cause célèbre;* and over two hundred pages culled from the writings of Erlich and Alter between 1923 and 1939.

All this material enables one to see more clearly why the Russians had to give up hope of making political use of the two Socialist leaders, and why they decided that they had to be killed. From their point of view, Erlich and Alter were dangerous men.

The memorandum to Stalin on the proposed Jewish committee against fascism is the most significant piece of evidence. In Erlich and Alter's view, this committee was to concern itself with three major tasks: making contact with and helping the Jews in Nazi-occupied Poland; taking care of the needs of Polish Jews in the Soviet Union; making contact with Jews abroad, especially in the United States. As a general principle, it was stated that the liberation of the Jews in all countries from oppression, from Nazi persecution in particular, was inextricably bound up with the liberation of all national groups living in the same countries. The "true liberation" of the Jewish people was conceivable only if social justice motivated the governments of the countries in which they lived. The Jewish masses in all countries should therefore fight together with their Gentile fellow citizens for social and national freedom.

Even in these generalizations, certain phrases hinted at a direct criticism of the Soviet Union itself. In particular, the phrase *"true* liberation," coming from such men as Alter and Erlich, could readily be interpreted as questioning the "social justice" known in the Soviet Union.

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In addition, the memorandum called for the closest cooperation with Jews in the United States and Great Britain in order to obtain the maximum of aid for the Soviet Union. In a letter to the Bund in New York, on September 27, 1941, Erlich wrote: "Officials of the NKVD dance attendance on us. The reason is they hope to be able to make use of our connections in America. We, for our part, want to make use of them in order to get in touch with [the underground in] Poland. . . ." As we know, the NKVD did not long "dance attendance." The Russians could not risk leaving any organization that had relations with the outside world in the hands of men who, after two years under sentence of death, still dared speak of "national" and "true liberation" for the Poles and other peoples of Eastern Europe. The Soviet Union had different plans for those nations, and so Stalin decided to rid himself of these troublesome associates early in the game. He may have reasoned that the Allies, delighted at the strength of Russian resistance to Hitler, would hardly bother about the fate of a couple of Polish Socialists; and he was quite right.

Did Erlich and Alter, on their side, seriously believe that the program they drew up would receive Stalin's favorable consideration? From the selections from their writings given in the present volume, we can see that neither of the two men had many illusions about the Soviet government. Perhaps they did hope a little that because of its new allies in the West the Soviet regime had softened its attitude, and was willing to make certain concessions. More likely, however, they framed their program as they did because they were unable to compromise what they considered fundamental political and moral principles.

This same refusal to compromise had been responsible for their first arrest by the Russians. Both men refused to heed urgent pleas from Bund comrades to go into hiding. Erlich even refused to shave his beard and change his way of dress. Alter, together with other leaders of the Polish trade-union movement, addressed a petition to the Soviet occupation authorities in Kovel the very day the Red Army entered the city, expressing the hope that the Soviet Union would help free the people of Poland from Nazi enslavement; the Soviet reply was to arrest all the signatories. Throughout the "administrative hearings" they endured under arrest, Erlich and Alter never lost an opportunity to put on record their real convictions. It was as though they had lost all concern for personal survival. Given the circumstances, given the era of political barbarism in which they lived, the openness and sincerity of these two men, their rectitude and high-mindedness, could only have had fatal results for themselves. And the same applies to the movement they led.

CERTAIN facts not mentioned in the present book may throw further light on the story.

During the week in which the two Bundists were arrested for the second and last time—which was also the week in which Stalin was entertaining General Wladyslaw Sikorski as representative of the Polish government-in-exile—it was announced in Kuibyshev that a Union of Polish Patriots had been set up. This Soviet-controlled organization became the germ of the present government of Poland and later served as the pretext and agent for the suppression of the claims of the Polish government-in-exile upon the latter's return to its homeland.

It is more than likely that Alter and Erlich were summoned from their hotel, on the night they were last seen, in order to discuss their possible participation in the Union of Polish Patriots, one of whose ostensible concerns was the "welfare and education" of Polish refugees in the Soviet Union. It is also likely that the two Socialists, immediately grasping the purpose of the new organization, refused to join it, and that this refusal sealed their fate. For the existence of such a Union of Polish Patriots would have been unthinkable with Alter and Erlich still alive in the USSR—and outside it.

ON APRIL 23, 1942, in Kuibyshev, it was announced that a Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee had been founded on August 24, 1941—fully eight months before! No one explained why it had taken so long to make this fact public or what the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee had been doing in the interval. Also unexplained was why the announcement was not made by a representative of the Committee itself, but by a Soviet propaganda agent. In any case, the first issue of *Aynikayt*, the official organ of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, appeared on June 17, 1942, reporting that the first appeal to world Jewry by Soviet Jews had been issued at the beginning of April 1942. Subsequently, official Soviet propaganda set back the date of this first appeal to August 1941. The Committee was headed by the poet Itzik Feffer and the actor and director Solomon Michoels; Michoels

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had been originally chosen by the NKVD as the man to work with Erlich and Alter.

Michoels and Feffer visited the United States in the spring of 1943 in order to organize American Jewish support for the Soviet Union. This was soon after the victory of Stalingrad and the subsequent Soviet offensive, and Michoels and Feffer were received very cordially. The pure flame of anger that had burned at a mass meeting called in New York on March 30, 1943 to protest against the murder of Erlich and Alter suddenly died down in May under jubilant panegyrics to the Jewish people's "greatest friend and savior—the Soviet Union." (Let it here be recorded that of all the Jewish organizations, the socialist ones alone actively boycotted the receptions for Feffer and Michoels: namely, the Jewish Labor Committee, the Workmen's Circle, the Jewish Labor Bund, the Jewish Social-Democratic Federation, the Labor Zionist Organization of America, and the National Jewish Workers' Alliance of America.)

Since 1943 Americans have learned to understand better the nature of the Soviet regime, which is responsible for the deaths of more socialists *and* more Communists than any other government in the world—not excluding that of Nazi Germany. The publication of this book offers the basis for a further re-evaluation of Russia's professed love of "democracy," "socialism," and "peace," as well as her avowed concern for the welfare of oppressed peoples and persecuted minorities.

BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

ALLEN MANDELBAUM is a member of the Society of Fellows at Harvard.

After several years at Cornell University, DAVID DAICHES has returned to England to teach at Cambridge.

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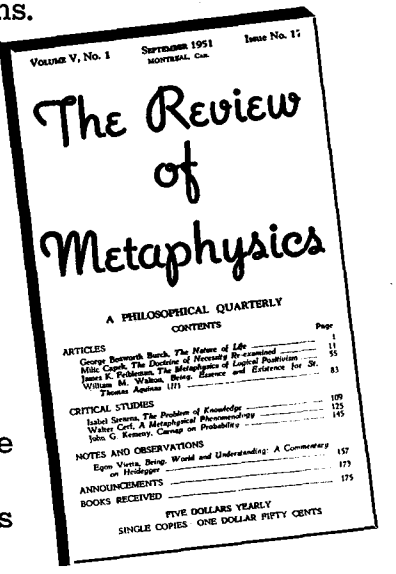
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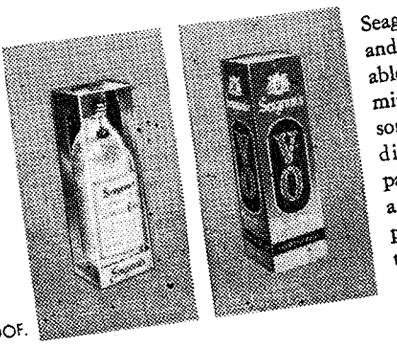

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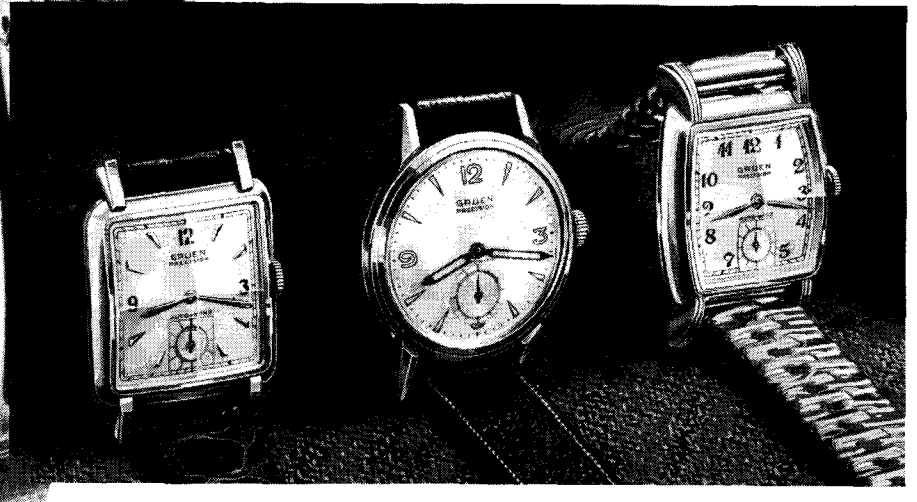

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